Falling in the 'Unequal Contest': Adhesiveness and Surplus Punishment in Shakespeare

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Scott Alexander Clawson

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There are numerous ‘adhesive’ characters to whom this thesis owes a great debt.

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Abstract

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Scott Clawson

This thesis seeks to introduce a new set of terms – 'surplus', 'excess', and 'adhesiveness' – to Shakespearean scholarship, so that we may better understand our own reactions to mistreated or misunderstood characters, and to highlight how the playwright used them to ensure that his plays were remembered long after they had been experienced. By focusing on Shakespeare's comedies and his comedic characters, each chapter will explore how the genre can be used as a vehicle for subverting expectations, by persuading an audience to feel more strongly for a particular character than they would otherwise, through a combination of the attribution of 'humanity' and the subsequent excessive nature of their treatment or punishment when compared to their flaws.

Written with an emphasis on utilising the methodology of 'character criticism', I will argue that it is through experiencing Shakespeare that we better understand his characters, and that an emotional reaction, informed by one's own life experiences, is no less valuable than a purely academic one. This argument will be established by exploring the reactions of writers such as Charles Lamb, but also of those who have written prequels, sequels, adaptations, or offshoots since experiencing the plays for themselves. This list includes, but is not limited to, the works of Gabriel Josipovici, Arnold Wesker, Marina Warner, John Fletcher, and Shakespeare himself. In support of that argument, this work will also draw on the historical experiences of mistreated Others, and on the classical concept of an argument or a debate, to demonstrate that varied emotional reactions to certain events are neither new nor invalid.

The purpose of this thesis is not only to introduce new terms with which we can think about Shakespeare, but also to rehabilitate, through healthy debate, emotional reactions, and those who had them, back into Shakespearean scholarship, ensuring that the field remains accessible and welcoming for future generations.

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Preface

In 2014, after being closed for three years for a complete rebuild, the Everyman Theatre, situated on Hope Street in Liverpool, reopened its doors with an inaugural production of William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. The play, directed by Gemma Bodinetz, ran from 7 March to 2 April, and featured a cast of both new and returning actors. Matthew Kelly, who played Sir Toby Belch, and Nicholas Woodeson, as Malvolio, were part of the vaunted 1974 acting group assembled by Jonathan Pryce, which featured Julie Walters, Bill Nighy, Nicholas le Provost, and, shortly after, the late Pete Postlethwaite. With all the tools of the new theatre at their disposal, Bodinetz's production had the necessary ingredients for a famous adaptation of *Twelfth Night*.

The night that I attended, on 1 April (for what better day is there to watch *Twelfth Night* than April Fools' Day?), certainly exceeded my expectations. From the moment Jodie McNee's Viola burst out of a trapdoor, hidden beneath a pool of water, to the all-singing, all-dancing finale, this production was gripping, belying its lengthy, though thorough, runtime. The finale sees the actors running back and forth on stage, linking arms and dancing amongst streamers and balloons, singing composer Peter Coyte's version of Feste's song at the end of Act V, repeating the final verse over and over:

> A great while ago the world begun,
> With hey, ho,
> But that's all one, our play is done,
> And we'll strive to please you every day. (V. 1. 382-5)[1]

It was undoubtedly a buoyant ending. However, as the actors frolicked on stage, I was thinking about something else, an event which had happened a few minutes earlier. Nicholas Woodeson, whose acting was imperious throughout, had just stormed off the stage as Malvolio, angrily promising that he will be 'revenged on the whole pack' (V. 1. 355) of the other characters, who had not only driven him to distraction with tricks and games, but had offered very little sympathy when it finally came to light what had happened and who was responsible.

[1] William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night; or, What You Will*, ed. by Elizabeth Story Donno (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). All further references to *Twelfth Night* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.

This event, focusing on Malvolio's immediate vulnerability, directly followed by the celebratory finale, felt jarring. Though I clapped along with the rhythm of the music, I was thinking about Malvolio. What happens next? Does he exact his revenge? What would that look like? Woodeson, of course, reappears for the curtain call, thus unifying the world of the actors, but it was hard to imagine Malvolio being so willing to join hands with his captors and tormentors. Reviewers, though perhaps not quite as affected, also noticed a discordance. Sarah Hemming of the *Financial Times* noted that 'Woodeson's superb Malvolio […] is absurdly funny when tricked, poignant on realising his mistake and disturbing as he swears revenge on not just the characters, but the audience too.'[2] David Chadderton, writing for the *British Theatre Guide*, remarks that 'the real stand-out performance is from Nicholas Woodeson as Malvolio, who speaks the lines as clearly as if it were a modern play and makes him believably pompous but, in the end, we still feel sorry for him after the cruel trick that was played on him',[3] whilst Jonathan Brown of *The Independent* notes that 'Nicholas Woodeson was outstanding as Malvolio switching seamlessly from brilliant comic villain to victim'.[4]

There is no doubt that Woodeson's excellent performance contributed to this unsettled reaction to the close of the play, but is there more to it than that? Some years later, after being encouraged to explore this feeling of there being something missing that had adhered itself to me, I came across an eerily similar reaction to the steward of *Twelfth Night*, written in 1823 by the Romantic critic Charles Lamb:

> The part of Malvolio has in my judgement been so often misunderstood […]. Malvolio is not essentially ludicrous. He becomes comic but by accident. He is cold, austere, repelling; but dignified, consistent, and, for what appears, rather of an over-stretched morality […]. He is opposed to the proper *levities* of the piece, and falls in the unequal contest […]. I confess that I never saw the catastrophe of this character, while Bensley [the actor] played it, without a kind of tragic interest.[5]

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[2] Sarah Hemming, 'Twelfth Night, Everyman, Liverpool', *Financial Times*, 14 March 2014, accessible at: <https://www.ft.com/content/edd6b6b4-aaa4-11e3-9fd6-00144feab7de> [accessed 18th January 2022].
[3] David Chadderton, 'Twelfth Night', *British Theatre Guide*, undated, accessible at: <https://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/twelfth-night-everyman-theatr-9965> [accessed 18th January 2022].
[4] Jonathan Brown, 'Twelfth Night, theatre review: Matthew Kelly pleasingly rumbustious as sozzled uncle', *The Independent*, 13 March 2014, accessible at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/reviews/twelfth-night-theatre-review-matthew-kelly-pleasingly-rumbustious-as-sozzled-uncle-9189823.html> [accessed 18th January 2022].
[5] Charles Lamb, 'On Some of the Old Actors', in *The Essays of Elia* (London: Methuen, 1920), 223-238 (pp. 227-231).

Like my own reaction to Nicholas Woodeson's performance, Lamb, writing almost two centuries earlier, was clearly affected by witnessing a particular version of Malvolio, played by Robert Bensley in the late 1700s. However, perhaps because his lavish praise seemed quite excessive, or because his subject in Bensley had already been outshone as an actor by the likes of David Garrick, by the mid-twentieth century, Lamb's reaction had largely been dismissed.

Sylvan Barnet, in an article specifically on Charles Lamb and his 'tragic Malvolio', remarks that Lamb is 'writing of his own Malvolio',[6] perhaps suggesting that he was misremembering the strength of Bensley's performance and had fabricated his own ideal characterisation. Barnet follows this suggestion with a dismissively succinct summary: '[Lamb's] interpretation of the play is *wrong*' (my emphasis).[7] Just five years later, C. L. Barber would cast further aspersion on Lamb's reaction by suggesting that it was now standard critical practice to disagree with him: 'Most people now agree that Charles Lamb's sympathy for [Malvolio's] enterprise and commiseration for his sorrows is a romantic and bourgeois distortion'.[8] Both critics take a similar line against Lamb, believing that he had taken what was perhaps an ordinary performance of *Twelfth Night* and 'distorted' or wrongly 'interpreted' it, thus inventing his own version. This conclusion, of course, places the onus for the mistaken reaction on Lamb, and not on Bensley's performance, or even on Shakespeare himself for writing such a complex character who could be construed in a variety of ways and whose ending might be seen as something more than comical and just. These critics clearly believe that, whether he knew it or not, it is Lamb's fault for viewing the play as idiosyncratically as he did, through his 'romantic and bourgeois' lens, and not the 'correct' way, as Shakespeare would have intended it.

Perhaps, if Lamb saw something of himself in Bensley's Malvolio, he was simply reacting to whether he would enjoy experiencing the same fate as the steward. Lamb's personal history suggests that he at least knew what it would be like to think that he is 'mad indeed' (IV. 2. 75), having spent some time in a 'mad house'. As he put it to his friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge in a letter dated May 1796:

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[6] Sylvan Barnet, 'Charles Lamb and the Tragic Malvolio', *Philological Quarterly*, 33 (1954), 178-188 (p. 187).
[7] Barnet, 'Charles Lamb and the Tragic Malvolio', p. 187.
[8] C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959; reprinted 2012), p. 290. ProQuest ebook.

> I know not what suffering scenes you have gone through at Bristol – my life has been somewhat diversified of late. The 6 weeks that finished last year and began this your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a mad house at Hoxton – I am got somewhat rational now, and don't bite any one. But mad I was – and many a vagary my imagination played with me, enough to make a volume if all told.[9]

Lamb's sister, and lifelong collaborator, Mary, also suffered from mental breakdowns during this period, though none so significant as in September 1796, when she attacked and killed her mother. The *Morning Chronicle* reported the events as follows:

> On Friday afternoon the Coroner and a respectable Jury sat on the body of a Lady from the neighbourhood of Holborn, who died in consequence of a wound from her daughter the preceding day. It appeared by the evidence adduced, that while the family were preparing for dinner, the young lady seized a case knife laying on the table, and in a menacing manner pursued a little girl, her apprentice, round the room; on the eager calls of her helpless infirm mother to forbear, she renounced her first object, and with loud shrieks approached her parent.[10]

The reporter suspects that Mary had become 'deranged' because of the 'harassing fatigues of too much business' and the increased attention that her 'parents' infirmities called for by day and night'.[11] However, in another letter to Coleridge dated October 1796, Lamb claims that the reason may have been because his mother 'met with [Mary's] caresses, her protestations of filial affection, too frequently with coldness and repulse'.[12] In either case, Charles was clearly intimately familiar with madness, and, in particular, with being incarcerated as a result of it. Though both he and his sister went on to become prolific writers and critics, it is not hard to imagine that when Lamb recalled seeing Benlsey's Malvolio trapped, tormented, and swearing revenge, it stirred something familiar in him, something which elicited sympathy towards the character, and, ultimately, his reaction to this performance as he remembered it some quarter of a century later in 1823.

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[9] Charles Lamb, 'Charles Lamb to S. T. Coleridge May 27 1796', *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. by E. V. Lucas, 6 vols. (London: Methuen, 1905), VI: Letters 1796-1820, 1-5 (p. 2).
[10] 'Charles Lamb to S. T. Coleridge September 22 1796', *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, VI, 41-3 (p. 41-2).
[11] 'Charles Lamb to S. T. Coleridge September 22 1796', *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, VI, 41-3 (p. 42).
[12] 'Charles Lamb to S. T. Coleridge October 17 1796', *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, VI, 48-9 (p. 48).

Reading dismissive reactions to Lamb, who was simply remarking on a performance as he best remembered it some years later, certainly provoked almost the same strength of reaction in me (and no doubt others too) as seeing Woodeson's Malvolio storm off the stage swearing revenge. Indeed, like the steward, it seems that Lamb's reaction was opposed by a 'pack' of hostile critics, before being hounded off the critical stage. Not only does it seem wholly unfair to declare a fellow critic's emotional reaction to art as 'wrong', but it allows for the same dismissal to be applied to similar reactions, including my own. If Barnet and Barber are to be believed, then perhaps my emotional, spontaneous response to Woodeson's Malvolio is also a 'romantic and bourgeois distortion'. Not only have I failed to grasp authorial intent, but I have allowed my reaction to be coloured by my own life and experiences, instead of viewing the play in a purely analytical and generically simplified fashion. On a fundamental level, despite having very similar reactions nearly 200 years apart, both myself and Charles Lamb appear to have misunderstood the text as Shakespeare intended it, or so we might be led to believe.

This 'misinterpretation' of authorial intent extends beyond those, like Charles Lamb, who are witnesses to Malvolio to those actors who embody the character. Tamsin Greig, who played a gender (and sexuality) swapped Malvolio (Malvolia) in the 2017 Royal National Theatre production of *Twelfth Night*, describes what happens to the character as 'monstrous', especially at the hands of the 'calculatedly and comically cruel' Feste and the complicit audience, who are never 'courageous enough to stop her and tell her she's being ridiculous'.[13] At around the same time, Adrian Edmondson played the steward in an RSC production which sought to explore the idea that the character was 'really in love with Olivia. A deep, life-long, unrequited, pure love, that he would be happy to leave unrequited but for this sudden opportunity'. However, Edmondson's insight into Malvolio, and the treatment he receives, reaches even further:

> Because the odd thing is that Malvolio isn't a particularly humorous part. He doesn't have many actual jokes. The joke, as it were, is on him. People laugh at him. He is basically the victim of a cruel practical joke. […] Malvolio's a sharp-tongued, po-faced joykiller, but he can't have started out that

[13] Tamsin Greig, 'Tamsin Greig on Twelfth Night: 'The self-judgement of women is awful', interview by Chris Wiegand, *The Guardian Online*, 20 April 2020, accessible at: <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2020/apr/20/tamsin-greig-malvolia-twelfth-night-national-theatre> [last accessed 10th March 2023].

> way. He runs the household with meticulous precision. And while he's unpleasant, he never does enough to provoke the wicked prank the rest of the household pulls on him, to be left imprisoned and losing his marbles.[14]

Then, with a final comment which would surely be derided by some as Edmondson misunderstanding the role, the play's festive atmosphere, and Elizabethan England, he announces:

> Thankfully we no longer find someone being bullied as hysterical as people used to. I decided that if I could get the audience to laugh at him being bullied and then feel very guilty about it in the last scene, then I would have won… comedy and pathos are brilliant bedfellows. Discuss.[15]

This invitation to look introspectively and 'discuss' is, of course, as will be contended in more detail in the first chapter, entirely Shakespeare's point.

However, it is worth noting at this juncture how Barnet and Barber's argument has evolved. Where they were looking back at a previous century and lamenting its 'romantic and bourgeois' sensibilities, there is now a different way of describing what is essentially the same 'over-emotional' reaction, but one which wishes to re-evoke the idea that we are wilfully misunderstanding and, indeed, misconstruing Shakespeare's intentions as a dramatist, and the meanings of his plays.

In 2008, American artist Erykah Badu released the album *New Amerykah Part One*, which included the song 'Master Teacher'. The song features repeated use of the phrase 'stay woke',[16] a phrase which had been part of African American vernacular English since the 1960s, if not longer. The song marked the beginning of the phrase's increase in popularity, particularly among white demographics, among which it was morphed, or, as journalist Brian Hickey puts it, 'whitewashed',[17] from an awareness 'of the true state of racial

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[14] Adrian Edmondson, 'Hamlet saved me from being expelled', *The Guardian Online*, 9 April 2020, accessible at: <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2020/apr/09/adrian-edmondson-hamlet-saved-me-from-being-expelled-twelfth-night-malvolio-rsc> [last accessed 10th March 2023].
[15] Edmondson, 'Hamlet saved me from being expelled'.
[16] Erykah Badu, 'Master Teacher', *New Amerykah Part One* (Universal Motown, 2008).
[17] Brian Hickey, 'Ask Hickey: How 'stay woke' got whitewashed', *Philly Voice*, 18 October 2018, accessible at: <https://www.phillyvoice.com/ask-hickey-white-people-you-stripped-stay-woke-all-importance/> [accessed 18th January 2022].

imbalances in the United States' to the more diluted sense of 'someone who is aware of a minor controversy or well-known difference of opinion'.[18]

The proliferation of the term 'woke' across social media, despite how far it has strayed from its original meaning, has meant that it has begun to dominate modern thought, but the ideas are not entirely novel. As journalist Perry Bacon Jr. remarks:

> In many ways, casting people on the left as too woke and eager to cancel their critics is just the present-day equivalent of attacks from the right against "outside agitators" (civil rights activists in 1960s), the "politically correct" (liberal college students in the 1980s and '90s) and "activist judges" (liberal judges in the 2000s). Liberals pushing for, say, calling people by the pronoun they prefer or reparations for Black Americans serve as the present-day analogies to aggressive school integration programs and affirmative action.[19]

Shakespeare, as is usually the case, is often found near the centre of these debates. Even the most cursory Google search for 'woke Shakespeare' will identify articles bemoaning the influence of 'woke teachers' and 'the woke' more generally for attempting to 'cancel' him, either through suggesting a change to a school curriculum or by merely talking about any of the undoubted problems present in his oeuvre, which include, but are not limited to, misogyny, racism, and antisemitism.

Without wanting to draw too much attention to this kind of journalism (and I use that term very generously), a brief look at an article in the *Daily Telegraph* titled 'This woke 'Romeo and Juliet' proves even Shakespeare is not safe from revisionists', written by author Celia Walden and published in 2021, draws interesting parallels between criticisms of 'the woke' and those of Charles Lamb. Walden begins her article by pre-empting that some 'splendid piece of language, history, art or architecture' is going to be either 'cancelled or bastardised',[20] a process which she claims occurs daily. Right on cue, she stumbles across

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[18] Mark Peters, '2016 Words of the Year', *The Boston Globe*, undated, accessible at: <https://apps.bostonglobe.com/opinion/ideas/graphics/2016/12/words-of-the-year/> [accessed 18th January 2022].
[19] Perry Bacon Jr., 'Why Attacking 'Cancel Culture' And 'Woke' People Is Becoming The GOP's New Political Strategy', *FiveThirtyEight*, 17 March 2021, accessible at: <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/why-attacking-cancel-culture-and-woke-people-is-becoming-the-gops-new-political-strategy/> [accessed 18th January 2022].
[20] Celia Walden, 'This woke 'Romeo and Juliet' proves even Shakespeare is not safe from revisionists', *The Telegraph*, 5 July 2021, accessible at: <https://go-gale-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=T004&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&hitCount=1&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&currentPosition=1&docId=GALE%7CA667530567&docType=Article&sort=RELEVANCE&contentSegment=ZNEW-

Ola Ince's 2021 production of *Romeo and Juliet* for the Globe theatre, which featured a racially diverse cast and a focus on the mental anguish surrounding suicide. In a remarkable act of divination, Walden, who had not actually seen the production, brands it as 'quite literally' a 'no-brainer'.[21] The rest of the article, which devolves into imagining other great Shakespearean characters '[reduced] to psychobabble',[22] strays so far from the (or perhaps any) point that it is not worth engaging with further. Walden, like many others who attack 'the woke', believe that these productions have strayed too far from authorial intent, just as Bensley and Lamb supposedly did some 200 years earlier by portraying and receiving Malvolio as a fleshed-out character, rather than as a two-dimensional stooge.

Though it is entirely up to Walden if she wishes to spoil each of her mornings by asking the world 'What's going to be ruined for me today?',[23] the idea that Ola Ince is reading Shakespeare incorrectly, or through a distorted lens, is not so different to Barnet and Barber claiming that Lamb was distorting the *true* understanding of Malvolio's character and treatment. I certainly do not wish to equate Walden's articles with the critical writings of Barnet and Barber, seminal pillars of Shakespeare scholarship, but there remains a common thread between their criticisms: these are not 'different' interpretations of Shakespeare, these are 'wrong', 'woke', interpretations.

Though this thesis was ignited by the treatment of Malvolio and a desire to rehabilitate Charles Lamb's reading of him in Shakespeare criticism, it will also confront the myth that we can only truly understand Shakespeare's plays by imagining ourselves as a Renaissance era theatre goer, complete with their perceived opinions about race, gender, religion, and society in tow, and by completely removing ourselves, and our biases, from the equation. The idea that these complex concepts should be considered in the context of their time has been considered before, most prominently and recently as B. J. Sokol's 2008 book *Shakespeare and Tolerance*, which discusses humour, gender, nationality, religion, and race in consecutive chapters, in much the same style as this thesis. As is demonstrated throughout Sokol's book, and throughout this thesis, attitudes to these issues have always been complex at best, including those topics, such as feminism and post-colonialism, which predate

FullText&prodId=STND&pageNum=1&contentSet=GALE%7CA667530567&searchId=R1&userGroupName=livuni&inPS=true> [accessed 18th January 2022].

[21] Walden, 'This woke 'Romeo and Juliet' proves even Shakespeare is not safe from revisionists'.

[22] Walden, 'This woke 'Romeo and Juliet' proves even Shakespeare is not safe from revisionists'.

[23] Walden, 'This woke 'Romeo and Juliet' proves even Shakespeare is not safe from revisionists'.

Shakespeare and the Renaissance. It is clear, as will be demonstrated, that even Shakespeare's contemporaries struggled at times to provide simple resolutions in the face of some of his famously discordant conclusions. Sokol offers a very succinct summary of how far-reaching, both now and historically, these issues are in the afterword: 'I will not be able to conclude in any real sense on a topic as vast and ramified as Shakespeare and tolerance'.[24] However, by drawing on some of the prequels, sequels, and adaptations of the 'lives' of some of Shakespeare's characters, the thesis will demonstrate that complex issues of race, gender, religion, and society have always been open for discussion and alternative interpretation, and that encouraging, not shutting down, this debate is much more likely to be Shakespeare's authorial intent than a more dogmatic system of right or wrong answers.

Crucially, what this thesis will also do is introduce a new set of terms to benefit this discussion. By borrowing and adapting terms such as 'surplus', 'excess', and 'adhesiveness', as to be defined in detail in subsequent chapters, my intention is to encourage readers and viewers of Shakespeare to understand what has occurred when they react sympathetically towards a certain character, such as Malvolio in the 2014 production of *Twelfth Night*, including both how and why Shakespeare might be trying to create that reaction. By exploring concepts of justice and the unjust treatment of character flaws or immoral behaviour, including defining at which point a punishment becomes excessive emotively – an 'unequal contest' as Lamb puts it – we can go some way to discovering why we may feel compelled towards some characters more than others; why we 'adhere' to them, despite being dramatically antagonistic or otherwise flawed. Finally, instead of merely presenting this lexicon, the following chapters will also track how matters of 'adhering' to 'difficult' characters is altered from one play to another, as they evolve in conjunction with a myriad of different societal issues. This evolution of complexity is what inspired the chapter order of the thesis – an experiential order – as it tracks the concept of 'adhesiveness' from simple yet effective to far-reaching and powerful. Further justification for this order, especially as compared to a more standardised chronological order, is assessed in greater detail in the conclusion.

Choosing just five 'comedic' characters to discuss was more complex than simply picking those who we feel are most tragically targeted by an 'unequal contest'. We may

[24] B. J. Sokol, *Shakespeare and Tolerance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 169.

lament the terrible fortunes of Romeo and Juliet, or pity Lear, who realises too late his mistakes, but these are characters with whom we are clearly meant to sympathise – they exist in easily categorised tragedies, after all. To track the same strength of feeling in comedies is a path much less obvious, though no less rewarding, particularly if it seems that the only purpose for a character existing is to provide a simple narrative foil to the 'protagonists'. Malvolio is an obvious first candidate, having inspired this undertaking, and his is a very typical example of a single character being out of place in a world preoccupied with joy and festivity. Shylock represents a natural escalation of the formula, as Shakespeare presents not just an unlikable character, but one who intends to act immorally, ie. he plots to murder Antonio, and cruelly in the name of fulfilling a contractual agreement, the 'bond'. Caliban takes this concept yet further again, presenting a character who *has* acted immorally in attempting to rape Miranda, though, because of his subsequent punishment, of painful physical torture, we are nonetheless left questioning both our reaction to his crimes and Prospero's right to own both him and island. Katherina seems to follow a familiar formula, offering us a character as potentially unattractive as Malvolio, on one level, but one who is mentally and physically tortured to the extent of a Caliban. However, the significant afterlife of Katherina, including during Shakespeare's own lifetime, helps illustrate the effect these works were having at the time, and not just on 'the woke' or the 'romantic and bourgeois'. Finally, this thesis tackles perhaps Shakespeare's most long-lasting character outside of his tragedies: Falstaff. Though he appears mostly in history plays, the world which he wishes to propagate is more in line with the festive atmosphere of the Elizabethan comedies, and this interaction with the much more serious action of the Henriad provides an irresistible inverse of the formula originally plotted through Malvolio and *Twelfth Night*: here is a festive character living in, and eventually exiled from, a serious world.

Though this thesis cannot recover these plays or characters from the criticisms of the past – nor would I want it to – it can at least offer a different lens through which we can all read and witness them. The opinions of published critics offer solidity which, though comforting, can often push nuance, debate, and sensitivity to one side in favour of authority. If Charles Lamb and these chapters inspire anything, it should be to give more importance to difference of opinion; those borne of genuine emotional reactions to art, and those borne

of the unique and vital lived experiences that we all, as Shakespeare readers of any level, possess, enriching our interpretations and the wider community.

1. Malvolio
'Misunderstood' Malvolio: Defining 'Adhesiveness' in a Festive Comedy

In *The Essays of Elia* (1823), Romantic critic Charles Lamb remarked on a performance of *Twelfth Night*, witnessed some quarter of a century previously, with Robert Bensley playing Malvolio:

> The part of Malvolio has in my judgement been so often misunderstood […]. Malvolio is not essentially ludicrous. He becomes comic but by accident. He is cold, austere, repelling; but dignified, consistent, and, for what appears, rather of an over-stretched morality […]. He is opposed to the proper *levities* of the piece, and falls in the unequal contest […]. I confess that I never saw the catastrophe of this character, while Bensley played it, without a kind of tragic interest.[1]

Though this description has no doubt found some favour with actors since, unfortunately for Lamb, his confessedly prolix style and choice of praise in Bensley, whose acting style had already been overshadowed by that of the brilliant David Garrick, resulted in his sympathies for this Malvolio being dismissed, including the accusation from Sylvan Barnet that 'Lamb's discussion of Bensley, I think, is Lamb writing of his own Malvolio, rather than that of Bensley's'. Just five lines later, Barnet provides a final dismissal of Lamb's tragic steward: 'His interpretation of the play is *wrong*' (my emphasis).[2] Five years later, C. L. Barber, in his seminal work *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, makes an almost throwaway reference to Lamb's feelings for Malvolio: 'Most people now agree that Charles Lamb's sympathy for [Malvolio's] enterprise and commiseration for his sorrows is a romantic and bourgeois distortion'.[3]

Barber's text likely did not have the space to elaborate further, but his dismissal of such sympathies is telling of the critical trend towards Malvolio, one that was recorded as early as 1601 by diarist John Manningham. One entry, written after having watched a production of *Twelfth Night*, describes the steward's gulling as 'good practise',[4] reflecting the

[1] Charles Lamb, 'On Some of the Old Actors', in *The Essays of Elia*, ed. by George E. Woodberry (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1892), 272-291 (pp. 276-280).
[2] Sylvan Barnet, 'Charles Lamb and the Tragic Malvolio', *Philological Quarterly*, 33 (1954), 178-188 (p. 187).
[3] C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959; reprinted 2012), p. 290. ProQuest ebook.
[4] John Manningham, *Diary of John Manningham*, ed. by John Bruce (Westminster: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1868), p. 18.

consensus that his treatment is some degree of 'just' or 'humorous'. Manningham's enjoyment of this scene may very well have been in light of the anti-Puritan sentiments of Elizabethan England, with Malvolio often being aligned, both by characters within the play and the audience, with stereotypically Puritan traits, or it may simply have been a reaction to a well-executed practical joke in the counterfeited letter, written and 'delivered' by Malvolio's tormentors in II. 5.[5] John Potter, writing in 1772, remarks that, though Malvolio is 'drawn rather in the extreme', 'the trick played him by Sir Toby, and Maria, exhibits such contrivance, and contains so much true humour, as cannot fail of affording exquisite entertainment',[6] and Nicholas Rowe admits that 'there is something singularly Ridiculous and Pleasant in the fantastical Steward Malvolio'.[7] Richard Steele comes closest to offering Malvolio a compliment, writing, in a 1711 article for *The Spectator*, that, though the steward is 'tempered with an allay of envy, self-love, and detraction', he has 'wit, learning, and discernment', and 'bestows such praise as can never be suspected of Flattery'.[8]

Joan Coldwell offers a different view of Lamb from Barnet, preferring to see his version of Malvolio as 'heroic' rather than 'tragic': 'What evokes a "kind of tragic interest" for [Lamb]', she states, 'is not the gulling of Malvolio […] but the shattering of a dream'.[9] For Coldwell, Malvolio's lot is similar to that of Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, who also has a humorous trick played upon his appearance, and whose interactions with Titania are described in dreamlike terms: 'I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was' (IV. 1. 204-5).[10] Contrasting the two, however, Bottom is allowed the hindsight to look back on his dream with awe, and faces no potential embarrassment from his transformation, though he seems not to feel it, anyway. Malvolio's dream is, by contrast, shattered irreversibly, and, for Coldwell, his true tragedy is that he

[5] For further reading on Malvolio, Shakespeare, and Puritanism, see G. P. Jones, 'Malvolio Flouted and Abused', *English Language Notes*, 42: 1 (2004), 20-26, and Jason Gleckman, 'Malvolio and Puritan Assurance', *Appositions: Studies in Renaissance/Early Modern England*, 10 (2017), 5-14. Both draw on the work of Kristen Poole, specifically her book *Radical Religion from Shakespeare to Milton: Figures of Nonconformity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
[6] John Potter, *The Theatrical Review; or, New Companion to the Play-House* (London: S. Crowder, 1772), p. 278.
[7] Nicholas Rowe, *Some Account of the Life, &c. of Mr. William Shakespear* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1709; reprinted by The Augustan Reprint Society, 1948), p. 13.
[8] Richard Steele, 'No. 238: Monday, December 3, 1711', *The Spectator: A New Edition*, ed. by Robert Bisset, 8 vols. (London: G. Robertson, 1793), IV, p. 139.
[9] Joan Coldwell, 'The Playgoer as Critic: Charles Lamb on Shakespeare's Characters', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 26: 2 (1975), 184-195 (p. 189).
[10] William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, ed. by C. Aldred (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1937). All further references to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.

must 'face reality without any compensations'.[11] Furthermore, the extreme physical nature of Bottom's transformation suggests that the change cannot be permanent, and, in a world of fairies and magical potions, we are allowed to believe that his fate is only temporary: the fix will be as easily applied as the initial transformation. With Bottom, the stakes are low, almost non-existent, and so we feel no sympathy or anxiety toward his position, in much the same way that he, largely unknowing of what has happened to him, seems to feel little unease. Shakespeare imbues Malvolio, however, with too much humanity for his supposed role as the killjoy in a 'festive comedy' – his complexity is also his vulnerability. Where Bottom seems to have an almost Falstaffian ability to match whatever circumstances he is thrust into, Malvolio cannot improvise. By giving him hopes and ambitions, something which an audience can see something of themselves in, but then pairing that with total inflexibility, we feel the shattering of his dream more painfully than Bottom's.

One can imagine that when Malvolio leaves the stage and swears that he will be 'revenged on the whole pack of [them]' (V. 1. 355), he will not be returning the next day to fulfil his role as Olivia's steward: his entire reality, including his sense of self, everything he took pride in, has been devastated, and this is not a situation that can easily be remedied. Writing in 1978, J. C. Trewin recalls a version of Malvolio played by Donald Wolfit where the steward does return to work:

> Malvolio must not re-appear: it was not Shakespeare's design, though I remember that in one version, preserved by Donald Wolfit, the man – presumably entreated to a peace – would kneel before Olivia and in dumb-show receive his chain. That is quite unpersuasive.[12]

Indeed, Donald Sinden, who played the steward in a 1969 RSC production, suggests that there is nothing left available to the character but 'suicide', and John Astington remarks that, at the very least, he would be 'heading for his lawyer, and Star Chamber'.[13] Sir Toby hints at the consequences of crushing such a dream when referring to the letter trick, 'Why, thou

[11] Coldwell, 'The Playgoer as Critic', p. 192.
[12] J. C. Trewin, *Going to Shakespeare* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978), p. 167.
[13] John Astington, 'Malvolio and the Eunuchs: Text and Revels in *Twelfth Night*', *Shakespeare Criticism*, 46 (1999), 338-347 (p. 346).

hast put him in such a dream that when the image of it leaves him, he must run mad' (II. 5. 160-1),[14] setting up (with glee) what is to come.

Modern criticism, such as Zahid Ali Shah's psychological study of the steward as a key example of narcissism, but of a kind that can be seen in common human behaviour, perhaps marks a more varied contemporary interest in Malvolio, especially as a character who can be viewed as more than just a two-dimensional Puritanical gull.[15] Fittingly for this chapter, Becky Kemper and Sean Benson represent both sides of the divide when it comes to how much sympathy an audience should feel for Malvolio. Kemper echoes the sentiments of critics before her in trying to find humour in the dark-house scene, noting that, by playing the steward for sympathy, a production may sour the final scenes and rob the audience of 'a satisfying conclusion'.[16] Benson, however, depicts Malvolio as somebody who is punished despite his 'careful hermeneutic', hurt by the 'inhuman sport' of those around him. Benson also refers to Manningham's diary entry as having provided the world with a 'longstanding tradition of misreading Malvolio as a gull worthy of being duped'.[17] Just as Benson returns to that crucial Manningham entry, it is the intention of this chapter to revisit and rehabilitate Lamb's review of *Twelfth Night*, and to open up the critical discussion to the idea that a tragic Malvolio does not necessarily invalidate the comedic or festive qualities of the play, or result in the humour being censored or diluted. Furthermore, it will examine the possibility that Shakespeare intended all along for Malvolio to be viewed as a mistreated or over-punished character, for the purpose of inspiring debates about justice as well as for entertainment. Although almost two centuries have passed since Lamb's interpretation of Malvolio as having a 'tragic interest' was published and largely dismissed, it remains a pertinent entry point for discussing *Twelfth Night* today, as how we view the steward can be seen as crucial to our understanding of the play, both on page and in performance.

There are three key elements of Lamb's description of Bensley's Malvolio that provide particularly important points of discussion. That Malvolio has been

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[14] William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night; or, What You Will*, ed. by Elizabeth Story Donno (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). All further references to *Twelfth Night* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.

[15] Zahid Ali Shah, 'The Malvolio Syndrome: A Psychological Inquiry into Human Narcissism', *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 21: 2 (2013), 129-139.

[16] Becky Kemper, 'A Clown in the Dark House: Reclaiming the Humor in Malvolio's Downfall', *Journal of the Wooden O Symposium*, 7 (2007), 42-50 (p. 42).

[17] Sean Benson, '"Perverse Fantasies"? Rehabilitating Malvolio's Reading', *Papers on Language & Literature*, 45: 3 (2009), 261-286 (pp. 278-285).

'misunderstood', that he 'falls' in an 'unequal contest', and that he creates a 'tragic interest'.[18] The first and final points can be deliberated somewhat in tandem, addressing the larger concern of how and why Shakespeare creates an 'unequal contest' for the steward in the first place. Lamb's tragic Malvolio reveals the contrasting image of the critical opinion discussed previously; most describe a man who, despite scant positive traits, gets what he deserves, whereas Lamb believes that, beneath his obvious unpleasant qualities, there is an honourable steward being overzealously punished. It is important to remember that, much like the play in which he resides, Malvolio is a character of halves: half loyal steward, half greatly ambitious. We cannot acknowledge his naked determination to become 'Count Malvolio' (II. 5. 30) without recognising that he is first and foremost fulfilling his duties as a steward to the letter, and vice versa. Paradoxically, Malvolio also attempts to bridge these two halves, remaining subservient to Olivia but harbouring desires to be her equal, or her better. Ultimately, it is difficult to not see him as possessing some shades of grey, and it is clearly this complexity of characterisation that drew Lamb, after witnessing Bensley's interpretation, to write in the steward's defence. Similarly, it is precisely this complexity which has been uncharacteristically downplayed or left largely unrecognised by Shakespeare scholarship, at the expense both of healthy debate and of Lamb's emotional response. This divided characteristic does not apply solely to how he has been performed or received critically, however, but can relate to what role he fulfils within the context of 'comedy' as a genre. Before this, however, we must first turn to who Malvolio is, his supposed crime, and how the revellers punish him – establishing the 'unequal contest'.

Malvolio's Treatment

Lamb's recollection of Bensley's Malvolio raises an important claim, that the steward is placed in an 'unequal contest'.[19] A simple examination of Malvolio's treatment by the other characters allows us to unpack this idea further. The steward's 'punishment' is presented to us in two phases. First, there is the cross-gartering trick, which is offered to Malvolio through the forged letter in II. 5. This scene is constructed in a typically comic fashion: an unsuspecting gull, Malvolio, is baited into believing a falsehood, that his mistress, Olivia,

[18] Lamb, 'On Some of the Old Actors', pp. 276-280.
[19] Lamb, 'On Some of the Old Actors', p. 277.

possesses romantic feelings for him, which will eventually cause him to humiliate himself, whilst other characters, and the audience, look on.[20] Though some may disagree with the concept of humiliation as a means of playing a practical joke, this initial phase does fit with Barber's 'festive comedy' narrative, and could even be framed as a tidy vehicle for 'neutralisation', as the killjoy is laughed off the stage. Barber includes *Twelfth Night* in his collection of 'festive comedies' – that is, comedies that make use of 'forms for experience which can be termed saturnalian'[21] – and describes roles that existed during certain Renaissance era festivities that can apply to characters within these festive plays. The Lord of Misrule, a mock-king of sorts that commands a troupe of merrymakers to encourage saturnalia, can apply to most of *Twelfth Night*'s revellers, but, perhaps most fittingly, to Sir Toby Belch, who encourages the initial charge against Malvolio (before bowing out for Feste), and delivers the play's most memorable retort to the steward's dampening behaviour, 'Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?' (II. 3. 97-8). Strict Protestant writer Phillip Stubbes wrote of the Lord of Misrule tradition at the end of the sixteenth century:

> They have also certain papers, wherin is painted some babblerie or other, of Imagery work, and these they call my Lord of mis-rules badges, these they give to every one, that wil give money for them, to maintaine them in their heathenrie, divelrie, whordome, drunkennes, pride, and what not. And who will not be buxom to them, and give them money for their devilish cognizances, they are mocked, and flouted at, not a little.[22]

Stubbes' Protestant outrage can be seen as a mirror to Malvolio's near-Puritanism, as both witness the collision of 'old world' pagan culture and 'new world' religious adherence. This role, and its associated 'games', Barber argues, may have been the birth of 'satire from festive abuse',[23] as permission is granted by the Lord of Misrule to deride anybody who

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[20] There are numerous examples of dramatic irony in all mediums of storytelling, of varying extremes. Other Shakespearean examples include, but are not limited to: the audience having knowledge of the real identities of the twins in *Twelfth Night*, the fairy characters and the audience having knowledge of the various tricks the fairies are orchestrating in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Iago and the audience knowing that Desdemona has been faithful to her husband in *Othello*. The effect of this is a kind of tension, which can be broken through a realisation moment for the unsuspecting characters in question, either with laughter or tragedy.

[21] Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, p. 1.

[22] Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1973), page headings: 'The order of the L. of misrule' & 'The L. of misrules cognisance'.

[23] Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, p. 31.

refuses to take part in the festivities. Maria defines her letter trick as 'revenge' (II. 3. 129), for Malvolio has interrupted the festivities of her and the other revellers with his reprimands, and, within the realm of a 'festive comedy', must be punished. Malvolio, much like those highlighted by Stubbes, has refused to buy into the Lord of Misrule's games, and must be 'flouted'[24] as an example to everybody else. Though Barber agrees with the consensus that Malvolio is not 'to be equated… as a portrait of actual Puritans', he does note that there is a 'curious appropriateness' in a Puritanical figure being 'expelled by laughter'.[25]

Though the revellers have a numerical advantage over the steward during the letter trick of II. 5., here Malvolio is provided with equal opposition of an antithetical ideology, and the two forces can, arguably, cancel each other out. After Malvolio appears before his lady cross-gartered, fulfilling the requests of Maria's forged letter, and Olivia subsequently leaves his presence, she tells the revellers that she 'would not have [Malvolio] miscarry for the half of my dowry' (III. 4. 56-7), and reveals an almost nonchalant attitude towards his strange behaviour during the cross-gartering scene. The use of 'miscarry', which in this sense can mean to 'fail in one's purpose', to 'go wrong or astray', or to 'come to harm',[26] suggests that Olivia does care somewhat about her steward's wellbeing, perhaps even hinting that she knows that what he is doing is the result of some outside forces, or somebody wishing to wrong him. Though she is not aware of what has caused her steward to behave in such a manner, his actions are not a cause for alarm, leading one to imagine a more amicable conclusion to the play if the practical joke had ended here. Malvolio would be informed that the letter was a forgery, and, though it may take some time to mend his damaged pride, Olivia showing him no ill will would encourage his return to work, and there may even be a stern word said to the revellers on his behalf, not least for fraudulently imitating her handwriting. After all, by reprimanding the revellers, he is simply fulfilling his role as steward, as detailed in a contemporary account (1595) written by the second Viscount Montague, Anthony Browne:

> I will thatt in civill sorte he doe reprehende and correcte the negligent and disordered parsons and reforme them by his grave admonitions and vigilant eye over them, the ryotous, the

[24] *The Anatomie of Abuses*, page headings: 'The order of the L. of misrule' & 'The L. of misrules cognisance'.
[25] Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, p. 291.
[26] 'miscarry', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], accessible at: <http://www.oed.com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/119259?redirectedFrom=miscarry#eid> [accessed 11th March 2019].

> contentious, and quarrellous parsons of any degree […] the frequenters of tablinge, cardinge, and dyceinge in corners and att untymely houres and seasons.[27]

From this evidence, we can surmise that Malvolio reacts with indignation towards the revellers not only because he is fundamentally opposed to their 'proper *levities*',[28] but because it is his duty to maintain order, a fact which would not have escaped Olivia's attention.

Edward Cahill discusses this gulling scene as the setting up of 'an inevitable conflict between what Malvolio unconsciously wishes were true and what he consciously discovers is not',[29] echoing Coldwell's description of this as 'the shattering of a dream'.[30] Causing humiliation *is* a cruel practical joke, and the shattering of Malvolio's reality and identity is bound to have adverse effects, but, within the framework of Barber's 'festive comedy', we can see Malvolio being returned to his 'rightful' level in a 'festive' world of this type. It may be unfair to force the killjoy to laugh at himself by today's standards, especially when he is simply fulfilling his role as a steward and has done nothing criminal or morally wrong, but at least there are some grounds to frame it as traditional Renaissance festivity, or 'festive abuse'.[31]

Yet, it is much harder to justify the second phase of the 'punishment', which creates a palpable sense of unease as the 'festive comedy' takes a decidedly darker turn. During IV. 2., as further punishment for Malvolio's transgressions against festivity, the revellers lock him in a dark room, with Feste taking over as chief tormentor, assuming the role of Sir Topas and attempting to convince the steward that he has gone mad. Some critics have previously touched upon the idea of the 'dark-house' phase of Malvolio's 'punishment' making uncomfortable viewing, but these comments are either fleeting, so as to ensure that narrative of the farce as a whole is acceptable, or can be passed off historically as 'acceptable for the time period'. John Weiss, writing in the nineteenth century, remarks that 'the play does not let Malvolio drop softly on his feet', and notices that he provokes a 'faint grudge'[32] in the

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[27] Anthony Browne, *A Booke of Orders and Rules*, ed. by Sir Sibbald David Scott, in *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, VII (London: John Russel Smith, 1854), 173-213 (p. 186).
[28] Lamb, 'On Some of the Old Actors', p. 277.
[29] Edward Cahill, 'The Problem of Malvolio', *College Literature*, 23: 2 (1996), 62-82 (p. 71).
[30] Coldwell, 'The Playgoer as Critic', p. 189.
[31] Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, p. 31.
[32] John Weiss, *Wit, Humor, and Shakespeare: Twelve Essays* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1876), p. 87.

revellers, whilst Wilson reminds us that 'some readers and spectators find the treatment meted out to Malvolio in the dark-house scenes intolerable', that 'we begin to feel that the jest has been "refined even to pain", and our sympathies veer towards the victim'.[33] At the beginning of the twentieth century, Henry Norman Hudson put it perhaps most accurately, describing Malvolio as a character who 'has hardly had justice done him', and that it is when the prank is executed 'at length' that we begin to feel 'a degree of resentment towards his ingenious persecutors'.[34]

It is both Hudson's 'at length' and 'persecutors' that resonate most strongly with the idea that Malvolio has been over-punished, and brings the discussion to what happens when the process of returning to festivity is over-stepped. Expulsion is Malvolio's eventual fate, as he is laughed, and shamed, out of society: the culmination of the gulling scenes, which can be framed as normal for a 'festive comedy', with the dark-house scene. The addition of this scene to Malvolio's punishment is what creates a sense of overkill, or a 'surplus' of punishment. There is a specific term in the definition of 'surplus' that relates directly to this sense of overkill: 'excess',[35] referring to an action or thing of too great an amount for what is required or necessary. This part of the definition echoes Lamb when he refers to Malvolio's treatment as the character falling in the 'unequal contest'[36] of the revellers, not only because they are, mostly, his social betters, but because they provide him with more punishment for the crimes he has supposedly committed than is deserved. Rather than being satisfied with how well the letter trick has baited and embarrassed him, they instead deign to press on with the attack, as tormentors, oppressors, or 'persecutors'.

The effects of 'festive abuse'

The first and final points of Lamb's recollection – that Malvolio is 'misunderstood' and creates a 'tragic interest' – encourage us to look more deeply at the concept of a 'festive comedy', as outlined by Barber, and why the steward, and his treatment throughout the play, struggles against this definition. There is, from the perspective of the revellers and the

[33] John Dover Wilson, *Shakespeare's Happy Comedies* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), p. 175.
[34] Henry Norman Hudson, 'Twelfth Night; Or, What You Will', in *Henley Edition: The Works of William Shakespeare*, 10 vols. (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1912), VIII: *Julius Caesar, Twelfth Night, Antony and Cleopatra, Cymbeline,* p. xxii.
[35] 'surplus', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], accessible at: <http://www.oed.com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/194992?rskey=JBesBp&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 18th Februrary 2019].
[36] Lamb, 'On Some of the Old Actors', p. 277.

larger society of *Twelfth Night*, something 'wrong' with Malvolio. Not only does he refuse to join in with the revellers, but he also actively opposes their manner, particularly at what time they choose to party:

> My masters, are you mad? Or what are you? Have you no wit, manners, nor honesty but to gabble like tinkers at this time of night? Do ye make an alehouse of my lady's house, that ye squeak out of your coziers' catches without any mitigation or remorse of voice? Is there no respect of place, persons, nor time in you? (II. 3. 75-9)

The importance which Malvolio places on time, or 'proper' time, is completely antithetical to Sir Toby's total disregard for the rules of not just the house, but of societal norms. Sir Toby's response, that they are indeed keeping time, but with their 'catches' (II. 3. 80), or songs, finalises the difference between these two characters – where one favours standardised precision, the other prefers to improvise their own rulebook. If Sir Toby is the most recognisable Lord of Misrule of *Twelfth Night*, and Malvolio is the killjoy who opposes him, then we have a typical 'festive comedy', and everything, including ridiculing the steward, should follow as expected. It is impossible for a character such as Malvolio to exist within a carefree society, even if his transgression is simply following and enforcing the rules too adherently. Thus, he must be removed or converted.

Unfortunately for Malvolio, the setting of *Twelfth Night* is distinctly 'old world', with the celebrants of pagan festivities being the (mis)ruling class. If the steward was *just* a killjoy, then the 'festive comedy' criteria would be complete, and the ridicule would be, within this context, justified. Malvolio's previously mentioned complexity is part of what prevents this more specific categorisation from being the end of the discussion. His character defies the labels applied to him, and, on a larger scale, challenges the ridicule that the concept of a 'festive comedy' attempts to permit. Logan Pearsall Smith, writing over a century after Lamb, touches on this idea of how we can describe Malvolio, and others like him, as a character: '[they] assume almost tragic proportions, and foreshadowing the tormented souls of the later tragedies, put the gay music of these comedies a little out of tune'. Furthermore, he mentions Malvolio in almost the same breath as Lear, a character who 'ran away with [Shakespeare]'. Pearsall Smith believes it is Shakespeare's more realistic

characters who steal the show, and thus includes Malvolio among *Twelfth Night*'s principal characters, those that are 'so human and so living'.[37]

When Barber, following his own concept of the 'festive comedy', refers to Malvolio as a 'kind of foreign body to be expelled by laughter',[38] he echoes the Lord of Misrule tradition, one that must be repeated in *Twelfth Night* for the 'festive comedy' to remain carefree and continue functioning as a pattern of experience. However, to 'expel', '**1.** To drive or thrust out; to eject by force' or '**2.** To turn out, eject (a person) from a society, community, etc.',[39] though it does accurately describe the fate of characters such as Malvolio or Shylock, does not apply to every example of the killjoy figure and their inevitable outcome. Arguably English literature's most famous miser, Ebenezer Scrooge, is not 'expelled' from society, he is simply converted to the way of thinking shared by characters who disagree with his parsimonious behaviour, rejoining the festive world of Christmas in the end. Some of Shakespeare's contemporaries had similar ways of 'expelling' their miserly, misanthropic, or killjoy figures. Ben Jonson offers some key examples that provide valuable points of contrast. In *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), Zeal-of-the-land Busy and Humphrey Wasp act as exaggerated caricatures of a Malvolio-type killjoy. Busy is an overtly hypocritical Puritan, claiming that eating a Bartholomew pig is 'a spice of idolatry' (I. 6. 51),[40] but can be done with a 'reformed mouth' (I. 6. 68) such as his own, and Wasp chastises those around him, stating of most things: '… this is scurvy, idle, foolish, and abominable, with all my heart; I do not like it' (I. 4. 29-31). Both are punished according to their crimes and their temperament, or 'humours', akin to a comedic 'neutralisation' – that is, '**2a.** To counterbalance; to render ineffective or void' or '**2b.** To render (an enemy, etc.) harmless'[41] – rather than 'expelling' them entirely. Both are put in the stocks for causing a nuisance (i.e., disrupting the good fun of the fair), which is temporary and serves to keep them from irritating the other guests, and Busy is later forcibly converted from Puritanism. The latter seems like an extreme penalty to pay, but the hypocrisy that Busy expresses throughout

[37] Logan Pearsall Smith, *On Reading Shakespeare* (London: Constable & Co, 1933), pp. 95-112.
[38] Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, p. 291.
[39] 'expel', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], accessible at: <http://www.oed.com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/66497?redirectedFrom=expel#eid> [accessed 4th February 2019].
[40] Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair*, ed. G. R. Hibbard (London: A & C Black, 1998). All further references to *Bartholomew Fair* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.
[41] 'neutralize', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], accessible at: <http://www.oed.com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/126463?redirectedFrom=neutralise#eid> [accessed 4th February 2019].

shows that he cares not for his religion, and how he is converted, losing a moral debate with a puppet of Dionysus, demonstrates the tongue-in-cheek attitude with which is it presented. They may seem as inflexible as Malvolio in their beliefs, but each conversion is deceptively simple – their hypocrisy throughout the play betrays that they are almost on the revellers' side already. Through their 'neutralisation', both characters can see the error of their ways, believing themselves to be superior, and are permitted to rejoin the festive world, 'Let it go on. For I am changed, and will become a beholder with you!' (V. 6. 105-6); 'He that will correct another must want fault in himself' (V. 4. 91).

Bartholomew Fair is not the only Jonsonian comedy to place special emphasis on the concept of 'neutralisation'. *Volpone* features a cast of almost entirely heinous characters, each trying to best the other through criminality in order to gain the eponymous character's wealth. At the close of the play, each is summarily 'neutralised' in a manner that suits their crimes: Mosca is sent to 'live perpetual prisoner in our gallies' (V. 12. 114);[42] Volpone is to be imprisoned until 'thou be'st sick, and lame indeed' (V. 12. 124); Voltore is banished from the fellowship of 'all worthy men' (V. 12. 127); Corbaccio must give his son 'all of thy state' (V. 12. 130); and Corvino shall be rowed around Venice wearing 'a cap, with fair, long ass's ears' (V. 12. 137). In *The Alchemist*, though Subtle and Dol Common escape punishment, they must do so without their profits, and their fellow conman, Face, must ask the audience for forgiveness in the final scene of the play. Though it is suggested that each of the triumvirate is 'clean got off' (V. 5. 159-160),[43] their final 'neutralisation' can be seen in the hierarchy of their gang falling apart, with both Subtle and Dol swearing against Face, 'Would I had but time to beat thee' (V. 4. 143); 'Rogue, I'll hang myself:/That I may walk a greater devil, than thou,/And haunt thee i'thee flock-bed, and the buttery' (V. 4. 147-9). Perhaps, like the play's opening argument between Subtle and Face, the three of them can resolve their differences for the sake of money once more, but Face's reputation amongst them has been tarnished. Face transforms himself back into his master's butler, Jeremy, and, by ending the charade he had created for himself, helps dismantle what was left of the group's plans. His final 'neutralisation' - moral and social - is his incorporation back into civilised society in the

[42] Ben Jonson, *Volpone*, ed. by Philip Brockbank (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1977). All further references to *Volpone* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.
[43] Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist*, ed. by Douglas Brown (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1976). All further references to *The Alchemist* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.

service of his master. The other characters that come to the conmen believing that they can gain great wealth (including the hypocritical Anabaptists) ultimately leave with nothing – a fitting 'neutralisation' for those chasing material gain through the power of alchemy.

Each of these Jonsonian comedies present characters arguably *worse* than Malvolio (some have more exaggerated flaws, most are criminals), but their punishments feel proportionate and balanced – that is, just. A large part of this sense of balance is that each punishment fits the crime, both in severity and appropriateness, leaving the audience feeling that order, societal, moral, or judicial, is restored. Moreover, to return to one of Lamb's key phrases, these characters are never presented with an unsurmountable opposing force, an 'unequal contest', which overwhelms them, and it is difficult to imagine an audience feeling dissatisfied at the outcome because there feature no overzealous or disproportionate punishments. In this sense, the conclusion of a Jonsonian comedy can be considered as adopting a form of 'neutralisation' that offers (or forces upon) the character a choice between returning to accepted society or being punished for flagrantly going against it. The former still feels like a 'neutralisation' because, by rejoining society, the character usually experiences some sort of net loss that would still constitute a punishment, therefore marking a restoration of order. This outcome is prevalent in the example of Face, who can rejoin society as Jeremy, but his lot in life is lessened as a result. One of Jonson's primary concerns regarding 'neutralisation', then, is making sure justice has been achieved.

John Dover Wilson discusses the differences between Jonsonian (or neo-classical) comedy and Shakespearean (classical) comedy, remarking on how the former 'lashes typical crimes and follies of the period', appealing to an 'intellectual, realistic, critical' audience, as opposed to Shakespeare dealing with 'a comedy of the emotions'. This key difference, he believes, is the 'secret of [Shakespeare's] dramatic art as a whole'.[44] However, if this is the case, and if *Twelfth Night* were not openly inviting critical discussion, then we are still left to ask, why does Shakespeare devise such an extreme, or disproportionate, punishment for Malvolio, culminating in his expulsion from the play, creating a palpable sense not of justice but of imbalance; of an 'unequal contest'? Either Shakespeare grossly misses the mark in trying to invoke the expected emotions of a 'festive comedy' in the manner of a Jonsonian conclusion, or he is deliberately generating a sense of unease to encourage the audience to

[44] Wilson, *Shakespeare's Happy Comedies*, pp. 21-33.

ask why these characters are behaving in such a way: a way that opens up the play to some decidedly serious and un-festive questions about mistreatment and justice, punishment and vengeful sadism.

If Shakespeare does miss the mark with the ending of *Twelfth Night*, there are examples later within the Shakespeare canon that suggest he was familiar with and adept at utilising what I am identifying here as the concept of comedic 'neutralisation'. James Edward Siemon writes about the evolution of evil in some of Shakespeare's comedies, bringing attention to *Measure for Measure* and *The Winter's Tale*, and how their resolutions are essentially 'neutralisations':

> By readjusting the pattern of comedy itself so that evil is dramatized as a force within society – within, that is, the pattern of marriage which stands in comedy as the paradigm for a healthy society – Shakespeare transforms the villains from a troublesome fellow who must be outwitted in order for society to reassert its health into a sick member of society who must be cured if society is to regain its health.[45]

It stands to reason that by allowing Angelo and Leontes their redemption in *Measure for Measure* and *The Winter's Tale*, and permitting these 'comedic villains' back into society, Shakespeare understands the same concept of 'neutralisation' that Jonson demonstrates and that the over-punishment of Malvolio, as we have come to term it, is something of an anomaly, especially when we consider that there is nothing to suggest that he is anything close to 'evil' or 'criminal'. In fact, there is something specific – something different – at work in *Twelfth Night*.

The Actaeon myth

How much importance should we give to Malvolio during a production of *Twelfth Night*, knowing that, in the grand scheme of the mistaken lovers/twins main plot, he exerts very little influence? The genre which Malvolio finds himself in, that of a 'festive comedy', has led critics to be as equally contemptuous about how much importance we should be affording him in critical work and productions. Wilson tells us in his extravagant praise of *Twelfth*

[45] James Edward Siemon, 'The Canker Within: Some Observations on the Role of the Villain in Three Shakespearean Comedies', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 23: 4 (1972), 435-443 (p. 443).

Night that we 'must not take Malvolio too seriously; for assuredly Shakespeare did not', before referring to him as merely 'part of the composition', the 'total effect of which is one of gaiety and high festival'.[46] This echoes the sentiments of William Witherle Lawrence, who blames actors such as Henry Irving for giving too much 'prominence' to Malvolio, thus darkening 'the bright sunshine of Illyria with [his] misfortunes',[47] and Barnet, who tells us that 'if the plot is not ultimately harmonious, the piece is not an esthetic success'.[48] This concept that the brilliance of a play is diminished during a production that pays closer attention to the treatment of a particular character, because it is a 'festive' and traditionally Shakespearean comedy, and therefore must be free of any such complexity, is what we may now term 'old fashioned', and only serves to starve the critical and artistic conversation. The genius of *Twelfth Night* lies not in how perfect a representation of 'high festival' it is, if only we ignore the treatment of Malvolio, but in that it can be played for laughs *and* for subtlety, in one production – there is no urgency to choose, especially for a play that is so obviously focused on binaries, mirroring, and duality.

If critics are to ignore the importance of Malvolio to *Twelfth Night*, then they do so at the cost of missing the importance that the revellers place on punishing the steward, whose actions have been anathema to their own, and the exuberance with which they act out their plans. Once Malvolio has consumed the contents of the letter and unknowingly fallen into the revellers' trap in II. 5., Maria entreats the others to 'pursue him now, lest the device take air and taint' (III. 4. 111), betraying her worry that their trickery may be uncovered, followed by Sir Toby's brief description of what they will do to him next:

> Come, we'll have him in a dark room and bound. My niece is already in the belief that he's mad. We may carry it thus for our pleasure, and his penance, till our very pastime, tired out of breath, prompt us to have mercy on him; at which time we will bring the device to the bar and crown thee for a finder of madmen. (III. 4. 114-9)

The revellers' appetite for further punishment is apparent, with Sir Toby wishing to carry on until Malvolio expresses remorse for his actions, his 'penance' (III. 4. 116), or until their

[46] Wilson, *Shakespeare's Happy Comedies*, p. 179.
[47] William Witherle Lawrence, *Shakespeare's Problem Comedies* (New York: Ungar, 1960), p. 7.
[48] Barnet, 'Charles Lamb and the Tragic Malvolio', p. 181.

pleasure in the trick is exhausted, 'tired out of breath' (III. 4. 116-7), despite the fact that he believes Olivia already considers her steward to be mad. Here he mentions 'mercy', an indication that, at the right time, they will relent and let Malvolio go free, which would perhaps fulfil the terms of the 'festive comedy'. Yet the steward is released from the dark room only towards the end of the play, only at Olivia's request, and only after he has written a letter to her in IV. 2., revealing, when she receives the letter in V. 1., the extent of his punishment to her for the first time. Moreover, it is at this point that Olivia, Orsino, and the others discover that the steward is the only character who still knows the whereabouts of the Captain, held 'in durance, at Malvolio's suit' (V. 1. 260), the man who brought Viola ashore after the shipwreck at the beginning of the play. This point of needing Malvolio only when he has something useful to tell them is echoed in the final moments of the play, just after he has left the stage swearing revenge, when Orsino tells Fabian 'Pursue him, and entreat him to a peace. He hath not told us of the captain yet' (V. 1. 357-8). It is here that the play falls into further uncertainty, creating multiple loose ends concerning Malvolio: we never know if Fabian catches up with him, we never learn the fate of the Captain, and we never find out if Malvolio ever does exact his 'revenge' (V. 1. 355).

A central theme running through Malvolio's double-punishment is the sense of hunters versus hunted, of Malvolio being the revellers' prey. Orsino's insistence that someone must 'pursue' Malvolio at this point echoes a litany of hunting or bear-baiting images used throughout *Twelfth Night*. Very early in the play, Andrew Aguecheek refers to his knowledge of 'bear-baiting' (I. 3. 79), foreshadowing Fabian's complaint to Sir Toby that Malvolio had 'brought me out o'favour with my lady about a bear-baiting here' (II. 5. 6-7). Sir Toby's response to this complaint is a reassurance that they will 'have the bear again', and 'fool [Malvolio] black and blue' (II. 5. 8-9), not only juxtaposing their plan with physical violence, but referring to blood sports as 'one of the many Sabbath pastimes',[49] something to which the Puritans (and Puritanical figures) would have objected. A sixteenth-century description of one of London's blood sports arenas by a visiting Venetian, Alessandro Magno, translated in an article by Giles E. Dawson, allows us to gauge just how violent an act Sir Toby and co. are imagining upon Malvolio:

[49] Elizabeth Story Donno, 'footnote '7 bear-baiting'', in *Twelfth Night; or, What You Will*, p. 99.

> Across the river in a certain place they have perhaps two hundred dogs, each separated from the other in certain small boxes made of boards. The dogs are the kind we use in Venice for bull-baiting. They also have, in another pen many bears and in another some wild bulls. In the midst of these is an open circular space surrounded by stands with their awnings for the sun and the rain, where every Sunday in the training of these dogs people find great entertainment. To enter below one pays a penny and two to go up into the stands. The amusement lasts from the vesper hour until evening, and they put on very fine baitings. First they lead into this space, which is closed about, and there is no way out unless they open certain doors, and they bring in, I say, a worthless horse with all its trappings, and a monkey in the saddle, then four to six of the younger dogs, with which they make an attack. Then these are replaced by leading in more experienced ones, in which baiting it is a fine sight to see the horse run, kicking and biting, and the monkey grip the saddle tightly and scream, many times being bitten, in which baiting, after the attendants have intervened a while, with frequently the death of the horse, and it is removed from the scene, they bring in some bears, either one by one or several together, but this baiting is not very fine to see. Finally they bring in a wild bull, and they tie it with a rope about two paces long to a stake that is fixed in the middle of the enclosure. This baiting is finer to see than the others and is more dangerous for the dogs than the others, many of which are wounded and die, and it lasts until evening.[50]

Though it seems that this particular spectator enjoys the entertainment more when there is a chance that some of the dogs may be wounded or killed, it is worth keeping this passage, and its casual glorification of violence, in mind when Sir Toby and co. use hunting and bear-baiting language when discussing what to do to Malvolio.

Their violent-sounding plan, therefore, becomes a source of entertainment for the revellers: a 'pastime' to be 'pursued' until it is 'out of breath'. In his essay on the similarities between *Twelfth Night* and Jonson's *Epicoene*, Jason Scott-Warren points to a commonly argued comparison: '[…] in the gulling of Malvolio, it has been argued, *Twelfth Night* actually stages a bear-baiting'.[51] Scott-Warren briefly mentions the 1987-88 RSC production

[50] Giles E. Dawson, 'London's Bull-Baiting and Bear-Baiting Arena in 1562', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 15: 1 (1964), 97-101 (pp. 98-99).

[51] Jason Scott-Warren, 'When Theatres Were Bear-Gardens; or, What's at Stake in the Comedy of Humors', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 54: 1 (2003), 63-82 (p. 66).

of *Twelfth Night*, where Malvolio, played by Antony Sher, is chained to a stake during the dark-house scene. This performance is used as an example of how the prevalent bear-baiting theme can be easily picked up by an audience, even though such a staging is 'likely to be chided by the critical establishment',[52] alluding to the general critical consensus that Malvolio's ordeal is humorous sport, i.e., a 'pastime', and should not be played this seriously.

There is, however, a further reference, this time to hunting, that has seemingly escaped comparison to Malvolio. In the very first scene of the play, Orsino speaks of how:

> O when mine eyes did see Olivia first,
> Methought she purged the air of pestilence;
> That instant was I turned into a hart,
> And my desires like fell and cruel hounds
> E'er since pursue me. (I. 1. 19-23)

Here, Orsino aligns himself with the myth of Actaeon, who, having spied the goddess Diana bathing while he was out hunting, is cursed to 'grow the horns of the long-lived stag'[53] and have his own hunting dogs 'dine upon their former master'.[54] Yet, as the play progresses, it becomes clear that it is to Malvolio that the play's opening reference to the Actaeon myth really applies, despite how heroically lovelorn Orsino considers himself. In accounts by Ovid and Callimachus, Actaeon's crime is that of seeing the naked form of Diana/Artemis, thereby becoming a witness to something forbidden to him. One could imagine that the initial moment of being discovered as a, perhaps accidental, voyeur is one of shame for Actaeon. Similarly, Malvolio unknowingly verbalises his ambition to become Count Malvolio before some of the revellers, who are eavesdropping on the steward as he reads the letter in II. 5., and they become witnesses to his desire for something that is forbidden to somebody of his stature (in this case, either Olivia, or the benefits of marrying her). The cross-gartering scene, III. 4., where the steward acts out the bizarre requests of the forged letter, is Malvolio's shaming moment, when his ambition is on display and the voyeur has been exposed. What follows for Malvolio is the dark-house scene, IV. 2., where, as it shall be later argued, the death of his social identity and selfhood occur, as his authority is

[52] Scott-Warren, 'When Theatres Were Bear-Gardens', p. 66.
[53] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. by Frank Justus Miller (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014), pp. 137-139. Loeb Classics Library ebook.
[54] Callimachus, *The Hymns*, ed. and trans. by Susan A. Stephens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 244.

undermined in front of the target of his affection. The revellers, in this sense, become the hounds, members of the household who are usually under the charge of the steward, and who turn on him in much the same way as Actaeon's hunting dogs. Though not directly alluding to Actaeon, both Feste and Malvolio demonstrate their understanding of a human soul being transferred into that of an animal, or vice versa, during the dark-house scene. Feste, acting under the name Sir Topas, asks Malvolio, 'What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild fowl?' (IV. 2. 40), referencing the Pythagorean theory of metempsychosis, which teaches that, upon physical death, the soul of a being transfers to a new body. Malvolio, who thinks 'nobly of the soul' (IV. 2. 43), refutes the theory, before Feste takes it to its natural, if absurd, conclusion, with the transformed character, whether that be Malvolio or Actaeon, left forsaken:

> Remain thou still in darkness: thou shalt hold the opinion of Pythagoras ere I will allow of thy wits, and fear to kill a woodcock, lest thou dispossess the soul of thy grandam. Fare thee well. (IV. 2. 44-7)

When comparing the fate of Malvolio to that of Actaeon, however, a vital distinction must be made: that of the differences between bear-baiting and hunting in early modern society. Bear-baiting was accessible to all who were willing to pay the entry fee, but, in contrast, hunts were organised by and for the elites, who were largely considered to be 'the monarchy, the titled nobility (also known as the peerage), and the non-noble but landed gentry'. Whereas hunting at the beginning of the sixteenth century could be seen as a test between man and animal (and, by extension, as a means of training for war), later practises emerged which separated man from the violent acts of the hunt. Foxhunting, where the chasing hounds typically killed the quarry, allowed the hunter to redirect their focus away from killing and towards their skill in 'riding, speed, and winning'. The increased gamification of hunting perhaps peaked with the gentry's adoption and modernisation of the ancient pastime of coursing. This practice, where 'two grey-hounds chased one hare, ideally within a long enclosure called a paddock, while the human contestants stood and watched',[55] is closer to staking a bear to the centre of an arena than the elite may have

[55] Jonah Stuart Brundage, 'The Pacification of Elite Lifestyles: State Formation, Elite Reproduction, and the Practice of Hunting in Early Modern England', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 59: 4 (2017), 786-817 (pp. 794-7).

wanted to admit. Among the large collection of rules which endeavour to decide which greyhound wins the contest, as listed by George Gascoigne in his 1575 text *The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting*, is a crucial discrepancy between coursing and other forms of hunting: 'In coursing at the Hare it is not material which dogge killeth hyr (which hunters call bearying of an Hare) but he that giveth most Cotes, or most turnes, winneth the wager'.[56] In short, the hound which exhausts the hare and entertains the spectators the most is the winner, with the actual death of the hare being a secondary factor. This emphasis on entertainment over the prey meeting a grisly end is not so dissimilar to Alessandro Magno's description of, and preference, for London's blood sport practices – the more protracted the event is, the greater your value for money.

Like coursing, Sir Toby and co. straddle the line which differentiates blood sports and hunting. Though their language is violent and threatens Malvolio's physical existence, their actual methods are clearly designed to torment and exhaust their quarry, until he, or they, are 'out of breath'. A significant part of the claimed injury against the steward is his disregard for the perceived hierarchy of the household, illustrated earlier in the play by Sir Toby mocking Malvolio's reliance on his official role, 'Art any more than a steward?' (II. 3. 97). By using their individual and collective greater status, the revellers believe it is their duty to put him back in his place. However, though they believe they are fulfilling the role of the noble hunter, their real role is that of the hounds – no surprise, then, that, once the tricks have been revealed, Malvolio wishes to be revenged on the whole 'pack' of them (V. 1. 355): a term that frames his view, and our understanding, of them as having 'hunted' him. Though it could be argued that Maria and, later, Feste, are the ones directing the others with their machinations, each member of the group shares culpability for what happens to Malvolio. Their 'pleasure' is just as important as the steward's 'penance' (III. 4. 116).

There are further interpretations of the Actaeon myth that share similarities with Malvolio. In Euripides' *The Bacchae*, Cadmus implores his grandson Pentheus to remember the bloody fate of Actaeon, killed by his own hounds because 'he vaunted him/Against most holy Artemis'.[57] Discussing the Actaeon myth in detail, Lamar Ronald Lacy highlights a

[56] George Gascoigne, *The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting* (London: Henry Bynneman, 1575), p. 246, *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://www.proquest.com/eebo/docview/2240894561/99856979/F565E395BADD4E63PQ/1?accountid=12117> [accessed 16th February 2022].
[57] Euripides, *The Bacchae of Euripides*, trans. by Gilbert Murray (London: George Allen & Sons, 1910), p. 22.

version of the story where the hunter is punished for suggesting that he may marry 'his bathing mistress', deviating from 'the hunter's ritually enforced deference to Artemis'.[58] Malvolio's wish to do the same and become Count Malvolio in the process is enough for the revellers to consider Olivia disparaged, or to regard him as straying from the subordinate duties to his mistress, with Sir Toby referring to him as a 'rogue', and Sir Andrew wishing to 'pistol him' (II. 5. 31-2), meaning to shoot him. The force of their outrage is channelled into their torments, and, though Malvolio is not killed or physically harmed by the revellers, the injuries he sustains surely affect him deeply. Fittingly, Ovid's version of the tale notes a difference in opinion among those who heard about Actaeon's fate and proceed to debate its fairness or, conversely, its injustice:

> Much muttring was upon this fact. Some thought there was extended
> A great deale more extremitie than neded. Some commended
> Dianas doing: saying that is was but worthily
> For safegarde of hir womanhood. Eche partie did applie
> Good reasons to defende their case.[59]

With some remarking that the goddess's chosen punishment 'seemed more cruel than was just',[60] far outweighing the extent of his crime, 'if there is any crime at all',[61] Ovid's example reminds us that our own (including that of Charles Lamb's) modern reactions to the abuse of these types of complex characters are, at the very least, worthy of consideration and debate.

Unlike Actaeon, who sees 'unclothed divinity',[62] Malvolio has visions of himself as something more, ie. 'clothed'. He imagines himself in all the trappings of his potential new position; walking around in his 'branched velvet gown' (II. 5. 40), winding up his watch, or playing with 'some rich jewel' (II. 5. 51). As the editors of the Cambridge edition of *Twelfth Night* suggest, the hyphen present before 'some rich jewel' hints at a pause, a moment where Malvolio 'forgets that in his new status he will not be wearing his steward's chain'.[63] This delay can be seen as the moment he sees himself fully 'clothed', marking the transition

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[58] Lamar Ronald Lacy, 'Aktaion and a Lost "Bath of Artemis"', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 110 (1990), 26-42 (p. 42).
[59] Ovid, *The. xv. Bookes of P. Ovidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis*, trans. by Arthur Golding (London: Willyam Seres, 1567), fol. 34ʳ, *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://search-proquest-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/docview/2240861651?accountid=12117> [accessed 27th August 2020].
[60] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, p. 143.
[61] Leonard Barkan, 'Diana and Actaeon: The Myth as Synthesis', *English Literary Renaissance*, 10: 3 (1980), 317-359 (p. 319).
[62] Barkan, 'Diana and Actaeon', p. 321.
[63] Elizabeth Story Donno, 'footnote '50-1 play with my - '', in *Twelfth Night; or, What You Will*, p. 101.

between his current and imagined future status. As François Laroque suggests in his own study of Actaeon in Shakespeare, Malvolio's imagined 'branched velvet gown' (II. 5. 40) also hints towards his transformation into a stag, with 'branched' being 'prominently applied to a deer's antlers',[64] and 'velvet', as referenced by the Oxford English Dictionary, also meaning the 'soft downy skin which covers a deer's horn while in the growing stage'.[65] In addition to the literal or cervine clothes he imagines himself wearing, Malvolio envisions a version of himself 'clothed' in the sovereignty of his new status, where he can summon 'Seven of my people' (II. 5. 49) to fetch Sir Toby, and command that he 'amend [his] drunkeness' (II. 5. 60) – a direct contrast to the reality he experiences at the end of the play, as he reveals in his letter to Olivia, '[you have] given your drunken cousin rule over me' (V. 1. 283-4). It stands to reason then that the revellers choose 'unclothing', in both the literal and sovereign sense, to punish the steward. When he re-enters the stage cross-gartered, he has been reduced to an image that provokes questions of 'What is the matter with thee?' (III. 4. 23) and 'Why appear you with this ridiculous boldness before my lady?' (III. 4. 34), his perceived authority therefore lessened to below that of a steward. Echoing Barber's aforementioned note that there is a 'curious appropriateness' in a Puritanical figure being 'expelled by laughter',[66] that same apposite feeling continues here, as an opponent of bear-baiting is hunted by those he once had authority over, his fantasies of how 'clothed' his life may become resulting in the revellers' violent reaction to him.

Malvolio the problem

The extent of the psychological damage the torment does to Malvolio cannot be ascertained. In terms of physical space, for instance, it is not clear how much of the dark room the steward has to move around in. Stage directions refer to Malvolio speaking from '*Within*' (IV. 2. 18), suggesting that he is offstage, invisible to the audience, and his inability to see Feste/Sir Topas, 'Thou mightst have done this without thy beard and gown; he sees thee not' (IV. 2. 51-2), supports this staging. Regardless, multiple productions of the play have chosen to keep the character confined within a cage of sorts during this scene, with the audience

[64] François Laroque, 'Ovidian v(o)ices in Marlowe and Shakespeare: the Actaeon variations', in *Shakespeare's Ovid*, ed. by A. B. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 165-181 (p. 174).
[65] 'velvet', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], accessible at: <https://www-oed-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/222017?rskey=PCisLD&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 18th March 2022].
[66] Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, p. 291.

only being able to see the actor's head through a viewing hole. On occasion, the dark room in production is an additional tool of degrading Malvolio, by separating him further from the rest of the cast than he already is. Adrian Noble's 1997 production put the steward in a 'dog kennel', whereas the Shenandoah Shakespeare production in 2002 made the steward 'an invisible voice coming from the stage trap'.[67] By choosing physically to confine the actor, these productions reflect the mental state of the character, who is being restricted by a numerically superior foe. Moreover, by locking the steward away in a small area, the audience is given a visual representation of Malvolio's status not just within the play as a whole, but at this moment in particular, when the 'surplus' punishment is being exacted against him: where the actor is physically confined, Malvolio, too, is struggling against the seams of the 'festive comedy' genre and its expected outcome, demonstrating that he does not 'fit' in this world of 'cakes and ale' (II. 3. 97-8). Only Henry Irving, performing in 1884, chose to 'free' Malvolio, using a 'split stage',[68] perhaps inspired by the frontispiece of Nicholas Rowe's 1709 edition of the play,[69] which shows a stage split in two equal parts by a thin wall, with the revellers on one side and Malvolio on the other, in darkness. This staging would allow the actor (Irving himself) space to perform, and the audience a complete picture of his despair. Though giving full access to the steward in this way allows for the expansion of a 'sentimental and piteous playing of Malvolio',[70] – an interpretation which Sylvan Barnet believes was the direct result of Irving, and 'a number of lesser Malvolios',[71] having read Lamb's description of Bensley's performance – this arrangement clearly did not catch on, with confinement remaining the preferred staging.

The steward is led to believe that he has gone mad and that Olivia thinks him to be so, but there is nothing to suggest that the treatment has genuinely corrupted his mind. Indeed, Malvolio insists several times during his confinement in IV. 2. that he is 'as well in my wits as any man in Illyria' (IV. 2. 91). However, the effects of the dark-house scene on Malvolio, especially when coupled with the previous gulling scenes, create a 'surplus' that cannot be underestimated. A term that Malvolio uses after he has fallen for the letter trick,

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[67] Penny Gay, 'Introduction', in William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night; or, What You Will*, ed. by Elizabeth Story Donno (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 46-50.
[68] David Carnegie, '"Maluolio Within": Performance Perspectives on the Dark House', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 52: 3 (2001), 393-414 (p. 396).
[69] Nicholas Rowe, *The Works of William Shakespear; in Six Volumes* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1709), II, p. 818.
[70] Carnegie, '"Maluolio Within"', p. 396.
[71] Barnet, 'Charles Lamb and the Tragic Malvolio', p. 179.

which will come to haunt him at the close of the play, illustrates this point well: 'I will *baffle* Sir Toby' (II. 5. 134), 'Alas, poor fool, how have they *baffled* thee! (V. 1. 348) (my emphasis). A particular definition of 'baffle', 'to disgrace a perjured knight with infamy',[72] illuminates just how damaging the dark-house scene may have been, not just in person but also in social terms, especially for one as lowly as a steward, who cannot fall back on the benefits of his status after suffering bafflement.

With status in mind, Cahill discusses the identity of the steward in Renaissance England, and writes of how Malvolio's concept of stewardship is intrinsically linked to his sense of self. The steward's desire to become Count Malvolio and 'transcend his paradoxical position as steward by marrying his mistress'[73] is at odds with his responsibility and identity within the household. The revellers are clearly acutely aware of this dilemma, forging the letter in such a way that will encourage Malvolio to leave behind his duties as the steward, and ascend to the position he feels he is entitled to possess, 'Go to, thou art made if thou desir'st to be so; if not, let me see thee a steward still, the fellow of servants, and not worthy to touch Fortune's fingers' (II. 5. 128-130). The end result of this trick and the dark-house scene is not just the 'the shattering of a dream',[74] but the shattering of an identity: as he cannot ascend to Count Malvolio, and yet, unlike Jonson's Face, can no longer return to being a steward, he is 'virtually *un-made*'.[75] Forced to reject his duties in the belief that there is something greater waiting for him, in the process, he is forced to reject 'his own selfhood', resulting in him leaving the play with no 'coherent identity at all'.[76]

The unusual nature of Illyria as a society is what provides a second blow to Malvolio's identity and ensures that he cannot simply return to his life as a steward the next day. The ambiguity and uncertainty regarding traditionally solid concepts, such as gender, identity, and social status, throughout the play, highlighted by how easily Viola can adopt the role of Cesario, a man worthy of being wooed by Olivia, presents us with a setting of great imaginative potential, where an audience can believe that almost anything can happen, akin to the forest in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As a result, there are 'limitless prospects for

[72] 'baffle', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], accessible at: <http://www.oed.com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/14597?rskey=iXRp7X&result=3&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 20th February 2019].
[73] Cahill, 'The Problem of Malvolio', p. 71.
[74] Coldwell, 'The Playgoer as Critic', p. 189.
[75] Cahill, 'The Problem of Malvolio', p. 71.
[76] Cahill, 'The Problem of Malvolio', p. 70.

human interaction',[77] and the restrictive rules of social climbing are suspended. Sebastian and Olivia are hastily married off, Olivia pursues the love of Cesario, despite him being Orsino's servant, and Viola wins the love of Orsino, even though he is a 'noble duke in nature as in name' (I. 2. 25). There should be no reservations regarding the state of the steward's identity in a world where one's status is 'essentially mysterious and fluctuating'. However, his 'rigid, law-abiding literal-mindedness, simply cannot face it':[78] the inflexibility of the very traits which make him a target in the first place ensures the destruction of his identity and selfhood.

When Malvolio has his dreams mocked and shattered at the close of V. 1., his experience has already been overshadowed by the coupling of some of those who had previously tormented him. The majority of these pairs, though their journeys to becoming matched have been fraught with confusion and deception, are reasonably balanced in the end. The only mismatched couple in the same sense as Malvolio and Olivia – of a servant and a master – is that of Sir Toby and Maria, who he has married 'In recompense' (V. 1. 343) of her writing the forged letter, fulfilling a promise he made earlier in the play, 'I could marry this wench for this device […] And ask no other dowry with her but such another jest' (II. 5. 150-2). Despite their difference in social status, however, the lack of distinction that Sir Toby makes between himself and the rest of the revellers lessens the impact of their unlikely marriage. Once Malvolio emerges from the darkness, he is in a world completely different to the one he left, populated not just by new characters, but by new couples. As such, he is forced to see the 'emptiness and cruelty of a world without dreams',[79] specifically his own dreams, as others get to fulfil their own. Cahill notes that, during this conclusion, Malvolio becomes a 'receptacle', the other characters siphoning off their own 'surplus', the potential of what could go wrong with their unlikely marriages, onto a convenient scapegoat. Malvolio's very existence thus 'makes comedy possible for the main plot'.[80] In essence, this is what constitutes the true 'surplus' punishment of Malvolio. His gulling makes clear that the play wishes to assume the form of a 'festive comedy', but what occurs beyond that point – the dark-house scene, the attack on his identity, and the destruction of his dreams in the

[77] Cahill, 'The Problem of Malvolio', p. 74.
[78] Laroque, 'Ovidian v(o)ices in Marlowe and Shakespeare: the Actaeon variations', p. 175.
[79] Coldwell, 'The Playgoer as Critic', p. 192.
[80] Cahill, 'The Problem of Malvolio', p. 77.

presence of the fulfilment of others' – prevents the genre from ever settling. The punishment, and therefore Malvolio, becomes too significant for the genre to accommodate, putting the 'gay music' of the play more than 'a little out of tune'.[81] If we are to describe *Twelfth Night* instead as a 'tragicomedy' or a 'problem comedy', then it is Malvolio and his treatment that encapsulate that tragic element, creating a character who cannot be read without a 'tragic interest'.[82]

Though describing Malvolio as creating a 'tragic interest' may seem accurate, it is important to note that he only 'assumes tragic proportions',[83] without ever forcing the play to become tragic. In his book on tragedy, published at the beginning of the twentieth century, Ashley Thorndike helps to define key elements that pertain to the vast majority of tragedies, such as the 'third part of the plot' containing a 'destructive or painful action', which may include 'mental as well as physical suffering'. Its action must be 'largely unhappy though its end is not, and destructive even if it does not lead to deaths,' and it must present a 'reversal of fortune, involving persons renowned and of superior attainments'.[84] However, Thorndike freely admits that any attempt at nailing a particular set of definitions to a genre is only likely to cause frustration, as accepted definitions change with the ages (if Wilson can argue the differences between Shakespearean and Jonsonian comedy, there must be even more validity in the same argument between Shakespeare and the tragedies of Sophocles or Ibsen, for example). *Twelfth Night* is no doubt first and foremost a comedy, but each of these definitions could apply if enough pressure were applied. Malvolio's humiliation begins in the third act, which creates mental suffering, and there is a reversal of vocational fortune through the destruction/death of social identity.

Such an approach would be one of false equivalences, however. The remaining portions of *Twelfth Night* are not largely unhappy, and Malvolio is presented to us as a person who has no superior qualities compared with those around him (he simply believes this to be the case, morally). The 'tragedy' of *Twelfth Night*, therefore, focuses on Malvolio only, and is not a symptom of the play as tragic as a whole. In this case, if *Twelfth Night* is a comedy with some tragic moments, the steward's presence may be enough to tip the play

[81] Smith, *On Reading Shakespeare*, p. 96.
[82] Lamb, 'On Some of the Old Actors', pp. 227-231.
[83] Smith, *On Reading Shakespeare*, p. 96.
[84] Ashley H. Thorndike, *Tragedy* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1908), p. 2-8.

into the category of 'tragicomedy' or 'problem comedy'. Lawrence discusses what makes a 'problem comedy' problematic, explaining that the '"problem" mood must not only be prominent in the action; it must dominate it' and 'constitute the controlling interest'. However, with this definition in mind, Lawrence goes on to write that this would exclude, for example, *The Merchant of Venice* as a 'problem comedy', because 'the clash between Jew and Gentile is […] part of a complicated action, with separate plots, which taken as a whole must clearly be classified as romantic comedy',[85] before excluding *Twelfth Night* and Malvolio for similar reasons.

This hasty dismissal raises a compelling question, however: how much of a 'problem mood' must there be before it can be considered as the dominant mood? Must a 'problem mood' overwhelm the totality of a play, or can it simply shade a large portion of it? The scenes in Belmont in *The Merchant of Venice* certainly feel subordinated to any scene featuring Shylock, whose lines, played either for laughs or sympathy, seem to linger with an audience long after he has left the stage for the final time. Malvolio may not be as dominant a figure as Shylock, but his treatment, again either for laughs or for sympathy, leaves an indisputable impression on an audience. Laroque argues against Malvolio having an overbearing influence on the play's conclusion, and, thus, the audience, suggesting:

> [though the ending may be] tainted with melancholy and uncertainty concerning Malvolio, the happy ending of the comedy […] leads the audience towards a form of re-membering and communal celebration away from the horrifying vision of dismemberment that had traditionally attached to the tragic story of Actaeon.[86]

However, it is exactly the spiritual and mental dismemberment of the steward, orchestrated by his own 'hounds', which threatens to derail the happy unions at the end of Act V, and which has inspired not just critical but also creative reactions.

Malvolio clearly has enough of a dominating effect to inspire adaptations that explore his life beyond *Tweflth Night*. Two such examples, Tim Crouch's one man show *I, Malvolio* (2010) and Gabriel Josipovici's short story *A Changeable Report* (1982), feature Malvolio as the standalone character, choosing to isolate the figure of the maltreated

[85] Lawrence, *Shakespeare's Problem Comedies*, p. 6.
[86] Laroque, 'Ovidian v(o)ices in Marlowe and Shakespeare: the Actaeon variations', pp. 175-6.

steward and examine him more closely. In New York, playing for a theatre of mostly teenagers, Crouch's Malvolio 'flings a noose over a ceiling pipe, slides a chair underneath and blames everyone for his lot in life – audience members included', before questioning '"Is this the kind of thing you like to see?"', which inevitably produces responses in both the affirmative and negative. Crouch wanted to '"reclaim" Malvolio and resolve his unfinished business', to '"present an odious authoritarian figure and then see if I could get the audience response to be, kill this hated man… And then maybe, even for a second, the audience will think about their actions"'.[87] In his short story, Josipovici writes from the steward's perspective after leaving Olivia's service, claiming that the only way to describe his now-emptiness is to say 'I have been dead for five years… I do not know how else to put it'. This incarnation of Malvolio reflects on the concept of his identity being destroyed ('They have taken away my life, though no court of law would convict them for it',) and reflects on what it may have been that put him in that situation: 'There was no cause. I had been gulled. But they bundled me in and locked the door… I did my work well. I tried to keep them under control. I asked for nothing more'.[88] During the reflection, Josipovici's Malvolio makes the important distinction between the act of gulling and being locked away in the dark, echoing the aforementioned concept of his 'surplus' punishment being a product of two individual phases, and he reiterates the fact that, as a steward, he was simply performing his duty to the best of his ability. These two critical-creative responses hardly seem like reactions to portions of a play that cannot be described as dominating; the very existence of these 'sequels' by Crouch and Josipovici, aiming to tackle the emotional baggage of the character, suggests that Malvolio has ruled somewhat over their creators' thinking long after witnessing his treatment.

This point brings forward a final definition of tragedy discussed by Thorndike:

> To-day we require of tragedy a probing into human motive, an especial devotion to the study of character under great emotional stress […]. Tragedy deals with pain, yet seeks to give us pleasure: – this crux has been greatly emphasized by the false antithesis between pain and pleasure […]. In life we are enormously interested in grief and suffering and disaster,

[87] Patrick Healy, ''Twelfth Night' Twit Gets a Turn in the Spotlight', *The New York Times* [online], 11th January 2013, accessible at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/12/theater/tim-crouch-on-i-malvolio-his-one-man-show-at-the-duke.html> [accessed 21st February 2019].
[88] Gabriel Josipovici, 'A Changeable Report', in *In the Fertile Land* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1987), 45-51 (pp. 45-6).

> as we are also in joy, pleasure, and success […]. Is there a katharsis that somehow transforms our pity and fear into relief and pleasure?[89]

Malvolio seems to operate beyond this definition, his treatment instilling something in an audience that cannot be identified as 'relief' or 'pleasure'. The sympathy he generates is arguably total and consuming, and, when he storms off the stage at the close of the play, some may still be thinking about him because there is unfinished business, a loose end, that artists such as Crouch and Josipovici have felt compelled to address. Malvolio certainly is a study of a character under 'great emotional stress', but his 'surplus' punishment is antithetical to the 'neutralisation' and balance we would require in order to feel that the issue had been somewhat resolved.

When Neil Rhodes considers the 'problem play', he remarks on the death of such a concept, as Shakespeare's entire canon began to be categorised as problematic in one way or another, '[it] had begun to look decidedly quaint and was tacitly discarded […]. [It is] a concept that has surely outlived its usefulness'.[90] In essence, this inability to define with certainty most of Shakespeare's oeuvre is echoed in Malvolio, as here exists a character that perfectly captures the terms 'problematic' and 'undefinable'. His character creates a 'tragic interest', without ever existing in a tragedy. The 'problem mood' that he generates is dominating enough to spawn adaptations, but without preventing the scenes he is not in from being undoubtedly those of a comedy, and he has inspired countless academic and dramatic debates about how best to play him. Even a film adaptation such as *She's the Man*, directed in 2006 by Andy Fickman, which focuses on a Viola who cross-dresses as her brother to play for his school's football team, opted to cut the character of Malvolio almost entirely, instead creating 'Malcolm Feste… a combo of the court jester Feste and Malvolio',[91] and relegating the name 'Malvolio' to that of Malcolm Feste's tarantula. Though one could imagine Shakespeare's Feste finding much joy in having Malvolio as his pet, and there is perhaps an appropriateness in Fickman's choice of using a venomous, often shuddersome,

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[89] Thorndike, *Tragedy*, pp. 16-7.

[90] Neil Rhodes, 'The Controversial Plot: Declamation and the Concept of the "Problem Play"', *MLR*, 95: 3 (2000), 609-622 (p. 609).

[91] When prompted, director Andy Fickman tweeted about his treatment of Malvolio: 'I want 1 of us to have a PhD! We were trying to get as much of Twelfth Night in as we could. The brilliant @thejamessnyder played Malcolm Feste who was a combo of the court jester Feste and Malvolio – who we named his tarantula after. Snyder even wore "yellow socks"!' (@andyfickman, Twitter, 21st November 2018).

arachnid as the sole nominative representation of the steward, it becomes clear that there are no easy solutions to answering, or rewriting, Malvolio and the torment he receives.

Concluding the play

Though each one of the revellers shares the blame and the guilt for what happens to Malvolio, special attention should be paid to Feste, who seemingly takes greater pleasure than most in both the dark-house and final scenes. We are introduced to Olivia's household, including Feste, at a crucial time in its history, 'without a *paterfamilias*'.[92] One could imagine that, for Malvolio, Olivia's mourning period was one of great importance, acting as the de facto head of the household whilst his mistress recovered from the loss of both her father and brother. The scene in which we are introduced to Feste, however, represents a turning point in this dependency on the steward, as Olivia seems to come out of her mourning period, and the clown begins to cheer her, or mend her situation, with wordplay:

> FESTE. Good madonna, why mourn'st thou?
> OLIVIA. Good fool, for my brother's death.
> FESTE. I think his soul is in hell, madonna.
> OLIVIA. I know his soul is in heaven, fool.
> FESTE. The more fool, madonna, to mourn for your brother's soul being in heaven. Take the fool away, gentlemen.
> OLIVIA. What think you of this fool, Malvolio? Doth he not mend? (I. 5. 54-60)

This causes concern for Malvolio, who sees Olivia finding joy not only in somebody he considers a 'barren rascal' (I. 5. 67), but in somebody other than himself – her dependency has been broken. What should follow her mourning period is the adoption of her new power as the head of household, but, as Cahill remarks, 'she is not particularly interested in exercising it'.[93] The resulting vacuum of power, as Malvolio rails against the revellers without the backing or authority of his mistress, leaves them free to mock and ignore him. Feste is clearly aware of the benefits of maintaining this imbalance, particularly after Olivia tells them both 'There is no slander in an allowed fool though he do nothing but rail; nor no railing in a known discreet man though he do nothing but reprove' (I. 5. 76-7), pitting the two men directly against each other.

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[92] Cahill, 'The Problem of Malvolio', p. 65.
[93] Cahill, 'The Problem of Malvolio', p. 65.

Feste's position in the play is almost entirely antithetical to Malvolio, acting as his obvious thematic foil; one playful and the other serious. His manoeuvring has resulted in him carving out the position of an 'allowed fool',[94] which seems to inspire the idea of making Malvolio the unacceptable fool, or the 'poor fool' (V. 1. 348), especially after the steward suggests his position is nothing more than that of the 'fools' zanies' (I. 5. 72). The Fool of *King Lear* occupies a similar position to Feste, in that he is an 'all-licens'd fool' (4. 192),[95] one who not only has permission to engage in risky word games with his employer but will abuse any 'unlicensed' equivalents. It is therefore the decision of the 'official' fool to decide who gets to be part of their gang, and who remains as an outsider. Feste takes great exception to Malvolio's insults and, during the dark-house scene, thoroughly enjoys flitting between himself and the guise of Sir Topas the curate, mocking the steward's pleas:

> FESTE. […] Say'st thou that the house is dark?
> MALVOLIO. As hell, Sir Topas.
> FESTE. Why, it hath bay windows transparent as barricadoes,
> and the clerestories toward the south-north are as lustrous as
> ebony; and yet complain'st thou of obstruction? (IV. 2. 28-32)

Feste's transformation of meaning, with the intention of driving another to submission, echoes the strategies of Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, when he insists that his prey, Katherina, admits that the sun is actually the moon. Katherina, who has been suffering other indignities in the build up to this moment, relents:

> Forward, I pray, since we have come so far.
> And be it moon or sun or what you please;
> And if you please to call it a rush-candle,
> Henceforth I vow it shall be so for me. (IV. 5. 12-5)[96]

Malvolio, however, repeatedly declares that he has not been broken: 'I am not mad, Sir Topas' (IV. 2. 33), 'I am no more mad than you are' (IV. 2. 38), 'I am as well in my wits, fool, as thou art' (IV. 2. 73-4), 'I am as well in my wits as any man in Illyria' (IV. 2. 91). Such protestations do not matter to Feste, however, who either insists that the steward is lying, or

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[94] Penny Gay, 'Introduction', *Twelfth Night; or, What You Will*, p. 13.
[95] William Shakespeare, *The History of King Lear*, ed. by Stanley Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). All further references to *The History of King Lear* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.
[96] William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. by Ann Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). All further references to *The Taming of the Shrew* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.

that he must be 'mad indeed' (IV. 2. 75) to compare his wits to that of a fool. This ensures that, regardless of Malvolio's actual state of mind, Feste will emerge victorious, especially with the backing of his cohorts, because he can manipulate his foe's words to suit his own agenda.

In the final scene of the play, when the gulling is revealed to Malvolio and Olivia, Feste takes the opportunity mockingly to quote back to Malvolio some of his previous statements, including the title of 'barren rascal' (V. 1. 353). For the clown, this moment marks his final victory, even going as far as referring to it as the 'whirligig of time [bringing] in his revenges' (V. 1. 354). Feste's quotations here – the returning to Malvolio of his own insults – are not just a demonstration of his powers of recall, but they betray what has clearly been on his mind since Malvolio first spoke them: getting revenge. The actions that Feste has forced upon Malvolio are entirely premeditated. The petty action of Feste throwing the steward's own words back at him hints at a truth more significant than mere 'sportful malice' (V. 1. 344), as Fabian puts it. It suggests that, underneath the veneer of the playful clown, there is a character that finds joy in the suffering of the baited bear when he believes it has slighted him. His lengthy part in the dark-house scene, and his dismissal of this action as 'that's all one' (V. 1. 351), that it is of no matter, means that his 'neutralisation' process has overstepped the mark of rebalancing the scales of justice.

Though Maria frames the letter trick as a device that will allow her to have 'revenge' (II. 3. 129) on the steward, Sir Toby's hasty exit in IV. 2., 'I cannot pursue with any safety this sport to the upshot' (IV. 2. 56-7), and Fabian's insistence to Olivia in V. 1. that the 'sportful malice' 'May rather pluck on laughter than revenge,/If that the injuries be justly weighed,/That have on both sides passed' (V. 1. 344-7) both demonstrate that the majority of the revellers feel uncomfortable with doing anything more to Malvolio than what he has done to them, despite their initial enthusiasm. Though the others do not attempt to stop what follows, Feste is the only character who, at this point, still remains focused on the 'whirligig of time' bringing in 'his revenges' (V. 1. 354). Of course, by following the Senecan model for revenge, Feste must 'compete in crime in every kind […] Let right, faithfulness and law perish utterly',[97] a mantra which, once the clown assumes the guise of Sir Topas to

[97] Seneca, *Tragedies: Oedipus. Agamemnon. Thyestes. Hercules on Oeta. Octavia.*, ed. and trans. by John G Fitch, 2 vols. (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018), II, p. 235. Loeb Classics Library ebook.

torment Malvolio, it is clear he has adopted. It is Feste's pursuit of 'revenge' that tips not just the scales of justice, but the balance of 'festive comedy' and 'neutralisation'. The 'surplus' results in the actions becoming vengeful, rather than justified, and begs the question of how the steward, who leaves the stage for the final time at this point, swearing revenge, can possibly create something in return to either 'neutralise' his injuries, or one-up Feste through a similar invention of excessive punishment. If Malvolio is to also follow the Senecan model, that you 'do not avenge crimes unless you surpass them',[98] then the question remains: what exactly does Malvolio's revenge look like, if he enacts it at all? Perhaps because Malvolio's revenge would so threaten the 'adhesiveness' he has affected during *Twelfth Night*, adaptors such as Crouch and Josipovici avoid depicting the steward's return to Olivia's household.

The clown ends *Twelfth Night* in the same way it started, with a musical interjection. Similar to other Shakespearean epilogues, Feste brings the audience back to reality, reminding them of the rain that 'raineth every day' (V. 1. 369), but also repeating his previous expression 'that's all one' (V. 1. 384). Emerging victorious from his duel with Malvolio, Feste is allowed the final word, and he uses the opportunity to close the conflict on a more positive note, attempting to allay worries that an audience might have about what happens next to the steward. His framing of the events of the play as something ephemeral that we need not worry about ultimately fails, however, as the aforementioned adaptations that give Malvolio a life outside of *Twelfth Night* prove that the clown has lost this last verbal joust, the power of Malvolio's final line and exit triumphing.

'Surplus' and 'adhesiveness'

When a 'surplus' is created, we are left with what Samuel Johnson described as 'A supernumerary part; overplus'.[99] The part that has willed other artists to expand on Malvolio's biography can be termed the 'residue', 'that which is left'.[100] However, it is not the 'residue' by itself that inspires adaptation. There being an excess of something simply creates a feeling of imbalance and unease, that something is not quite right with what we

[98] Seneca, *Tragedies*, II, p. 247.
[99] Samuel Johnson, 'surplus', *A Dictionary of the English Language, 1755* [online], accessible at: <https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/page-view/?i=1995> [accessed 26th Feburary 2019].
[100] 'residue', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], accessible at: <http://www.oed.com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/163588?rskey=RTXDlv&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 26th February 2019].

have just experienced. The 'residue' itself must have certain properties that enable it to remain with the audience long after the performance has ended, an 'adhesiveness'. Turning once more to Johnson, his definitions of 'adhere', 'adherence', and 'adherent' offer a sense of personal attachment: '**3.** To remain firmly fixed to a party, person, or opinion',[101] '**2.** In a figurative sense, fixedness of mind; attachment; steadiness',[102] 'The person that adheres; one that supports the cause, or follows the fortune of another; a follower; a partisan'.[103] The final definition here sticks closest to the concept of Malvolio's 'surplus' punishment creating a 'residue' that stays with the audience once the performance is over, inspiring others to discover what happens to the steward afterwards, or even to write that part of the biography themselves, as do Crouch and Josipovici. They have become supporters of Malvolio's cause, and it is through this definition that we can see perfectly Lamb's position, whose memory of Bensley's performance would be published 'more than a quarter of a century after Bensley had retired'.[104]

Pairing 'adhesiveness' and the creation of lasting memories is not a new concept, as the Oxford English Dictionary presents two specifically psychological definitions, '**2.** In phrenology: the faculty of forming and maintaining attachments to individuals', '**3.** *Psychology*. The tendency to [associate] ideas understood as forming the basis of memory; (also) the capacity to retain information or experience'.[105] The former, dealing with the now defunct study of phrenology, refers to a section of the brain of congenital origin, labelled 'Adhesiveness', and was said to control our willingness to seek out and create friendships.[106] The American poet Walt Whitman would later adapt this meaning to 'convey love between men',[107] but would make frequent reference to the potential of 'adhesive love' in all: 'I believe the main purport of these States is to found a superb friendship, exaltè, previously

[101] Samuel Johnson, 'adhere', *A Dictionary of the English Language, 1755* [online], accessible at: <https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/page-view/?i=81> [accessed 26th Feburary 2019].
[102] Samuel Johnson, 'adherence', *A Dictionary of the English Language, 1755* [online], accessible at: <https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/page-view/?i=81> [accessed 26th Feburary 2019].
[103] Samuel Johnson, 'adherent', *A Dictionary of the English Language, 1755* [online], accessible at: <https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/page-view/?i=81> [accessed 26th Feburary 2019].
[104] Barnet, 'Charles Lamb and the Tragic Malvolio', p. 183.
[105] 'adhesiveness', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], accessible at: <http://www.oed.com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/2339?redirectedFrom=adhesiveness#eid> [accessed 26th February 2019].
[106] A more detailed history of the phrenological term 'Adhesiveness' can be found at: Michael Lynch, '"Here is Adhesiveness": From Friendship to Homosexuality', *Victorian Studies*, 29: 1 (1985), 67-96.
[107] Laura López Peña, 'Dressing Uncivil Neighbour(hood)s. Walt Whitman's Adhesive Democracy in "Calamus" and "Drum-Taps"', *Lectora*, 20 (2014), 61-80 (p. 64).

unknown,/Because I perceive it waits, and has been always waiting, latent in all men'.[108] This kind of innate connection can create 'caring, warmth, solidarity, and love'[109] between men and women 'talking other dialects', as though they are 'men in my own lands',[110] Whitman states, unknowingly referring to how an audience can feel a connection with Malvolio, despite thinking negatively of some of his more unfortunate qualities and habits, which they may not possess.

In these terms, a form of 'adhesiveness' could be said to be present within *Twelfth Night*, but we are not given much opportunity to see it unfold further than on a very basic level. It is clear through Whitman's war poetry that he believed 'much suffering infuses the heart',[111] and it is suffering that provokes the one moment of 'adhesiveness' in the play, when Malvolio is finally released from the dark room and stands before his mistress, declaring how he has suffered 'Notorious wrong' (V. 1. 308). Fabian and Feste explain to Malvolio what has transpired, illuminating him both literally and figuratively, causing the steward to leave the stage swearing revenge. Also learning for the first time what has transpired is Olivia, who remarks afterwards, 'He hath been most notoriously abused' (V. 1. 356), referencing in part Malvolio's earlier uses of the adjective 'notorious'.[112] Critics have made a point of using this repetition as an example of the play's 'more lighthearted mood',[113] but there is no doubt that assigning this line to Olivia, and making it the last thing she says before the play ends, evokes sympathy for Malvolio no matter if it is played in a 'lighthearted' manner or not. Played for laughs, Olivia abandons her previous, and serious, stance of not wanting her steward to 'miscarry for the half of my dowry' (III. 4. 56-7) for the sake of joining in with the gulling, thus removing Malvolio's last chance of gaining reparations; played straight for sympathy, Olivia offers a moment of 'adhesive love' brought on by witnessing the suffering of another, thus displaying more humanity in this one moment than the other characters have during all of their scenes with Malvolio.

By becoming Malvolio's witness, Olivia acknowledges his humanity, and recognises a person who has had his identity 'baffled' and his dreams crushed. When Malvolio is

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[108] Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, ed. by Jerome Loving (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 110.
[109] Peña, 'Dressing Uncivil Neighbour(hood)s', p. 71.
[110] Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, p. 106.
[111] Peña, 'Dressing Uncivil Neighbour(hood)s', p. 76.
[112] *Twelfth Night; or, What You Will,* V. 1. 308: 'Madam, you have done me wrong, *Notorious* wrong', V. 1. 322: 'And made the most *notorious* geck and gull' (my emphasis).
[113] Elizabeth Story Donno, 'footnote '356 notoriously'', in *Twelfth Night; or, What You Will*, p. 160.

forced to live the 'emptiness and cruelty of a world without dreams',[114] as Coldwell puts it, Olivia is forced too to feel the effects of this, the 'adhesive residue' that emanates from his punishment. Although she has been absent from the tricks played on him, her handwriting has been used fraudulently in the process through Maria's letter, thus allowing Malvolio, knowingly or not, to siphon some of that 'surplus' feeling of guilt on to her. This results in her becoming a witness much like the audience members, affected by the 'adhesive'. Making the audience (and Olivia) complicit in these actions echoes the work of Crouch, encouraging the audience to think on what they have witnessed, and to think on how they could have reacted differently.

In this sense, Olivia has also been 'baffled', yet she is not the only character who seems to be affected by Malvolio's 'adhesiveness'. Also 'unpaired' at the end of *Twelfth Night* is Antonio, the seaman who rescues Sebastian after the shipwreck, and whose affection for the man he rescues inspires him to risk confrontation with Orsino, within whose household he has 'many enemies' (II. 1. 33). His love for Sebastian is denied at the close of the play, as the twin brother elects to stay with Olivia by virtue of her having married him, after mistaking him for Cesario (Viola in disguise). The same 'residue' that affects Malvolio seems to affect Olivia and Antonio too, as we are left with questions unanswered at the close of the play: Olivia never confirms her interest in Sebastian, Orsino moves very quickly on from his interest in Olivia, and Antonio is left with his love for Sebastian unfulfilled. The 'surplus' created through over-interaction with Malvolio must go somewhere, and its 'adhesive' nature results in it sticking to those with questions asked of them, Olivia, Orsino, and Antonio, and those asking the questions, the audience. The result is the need by artists and critics to address these queries through the mediums of sequel, adaptation, and debate. J. C. Trewin describes the combination of *Twelfth Night*'s genre-defying ending and Malvolio's 'adhesiveness' in familiar terms:

> Some critics will not hear of a past or future: to imagine the characters off stage is unforgivable. Yet, as *Twelfth Night* is ending, the mind follows Malvolio. Released from imprisonment, he arrives, desperately bewildered, sometimes blinking from the darkness and with wisps of straw caught in his cross-gartering, to hear of the May-morning trick. After

[114] Coldwell, 'The Playgoer as Critic', p. 192.

> Feste's 'Thus the whirligig of time brings in its revenges', he leaves the stage with his hoarsely threatening 'I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you': an exit that, in no circumstances, should start a laugh. Alas, it can.[115]

Despite how critically unfashionable it has become to consider the offstage 'lives' of literary characters, Trewin still finds himself drawn to this line of thinking. There is something magnetic about Malvolio when he leaves the stage swearing revenge, after his torment, something inherently 'adhesive', that defies the 'rights' and 'wrongs' of literary criticism, especially when witnessing those events in person.[116]

There have been attempts by some critics to 'neutralise' the final scene of the play and frame a conclusion that allows for and sanctions Malvolio's 'surplus' punishment. William Hazlitt, writing in the nineteenth century, believes we should 'sympathise with [Malvolio's] gravity, his smiles, his cross garters, his yellow stockings, and imprisonment in the stocks', also writing that 'poetical justice is done in the uneasiness which Olivia suffers on account of her mistaken attachment to Cesario'.[117] Though Hazlitt recognises that the punishment of Malvolio is harsh, his attribution of justice to Olivia's 'uneasiness' seems insufficient to account for the wealth of psychological punishment Malvolio is forced to endure, especially when we consider that this is a play belonging to a canon of comedies that seems to revel in unusual romantic mismatches. As previously mentioned, there is something of a topsy-turvy quality about Illyria that accepts the unusual as usual, and it must surely take something more than usual to correct the wrongs done to Malvolio. Allison Hobgood writes of the final scene where the steward, in an 'expressly theatrical' manner, begins to 'act the part of a man notoriously abused'[118] and pass that shame on from himself to the revellers, and to the audience. Though framing this final scene as Malvolio manipulating his shame to make others feel they have done wrong (instead of, for example, Malvolio simply experiencing grief, humiliation, and confusion) seems like a callous attempt at shifting the blame on to the steward, Hobgood does consider the reaction of an audience, and why they might choose to ignore Malvolio's appeals:

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[115] Trewin, *Going to Shakespeare*, p. 167.

[116] The relationship between 'character criticism' and 'adhesiveness' will be discussed in greater detail during the conclusion to this thesis.

[117] William Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, ed. by J. H. Lobban (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 195-8.

[118] Allison Hobgood, '*Twelfth Night*'s "Notorious Abuse" of Malvolio: Shame, Humorality, and Early Modern Spectatorship', *Shakespeare Bulletin: A Journal of Performance Criticism and Scholarship*, 24: 3 (2006), 1-22 (pp. 9-12).

> Put another way, early modern audiences might have denied Malvolio's call because, in hearing it, they had to acknowledge things too difficult to face: first, that they were complicit in his initial shaming simply by standing idly by and laughing while he was mocked, tortured, exorcised, and forgotten. They chose to do nothing. Secondly, and more importantly, perhaps early modern playgoers regarded Malvolio's faulty body as a mirror for their own […]. In other words, helping Malvolio in his vindication might have betrayed their own hopes for vindication […]. And yet, for these very reasons, spectators shamed Malvolio again even in the precise moment when he asked most for a new kind of recognition.[119]

By considering how an early modern audience might have felt watching Malvolio, Hobgood opens the door to considering how anybody may react and considers why critics have long felt the need to justify Malvolio's abuse as some sort of 'neutralisation'. Though there are some that feel giving a comedy a character with hopes and dreams darkens the 'bright sunshine'[120] of an otherwise humorous play, there is nothing to suggest that such characters should be framed in a way that prevents the chance for us to think introspectively.

Indeed, through viewing Malvolio analogously to Actaeon, specifically Ovid's version of the tale, with which Shakespeare would be familiar, we find a model for the uncertain fate of the steward. Such allusions open up exactly the same questions of justice, mistreatment, 'surplus', and 'adhesiveness' which have been contested, and dismissed, since Charles Lamb's recollection of Bensley's performance. Actaeon's fate, considered by some to be a 'great deale more extremitie' then necessary, reflects Malvolio's own punishment, which, following the steward's confinement to the dark room in IV. 2., strays beyond the usual boundaries of 'festive abuse', that of a fitting 'neutralisation'. The fact that there was 'Much muttring' about Actaeon's fate, and not a unified agreement about the justness of Diana's actions, demonstrates that there has long been precedent for questions of justice being left open-ended, and that, by not providing a solid conclusion, the intention is to stimulate debate. Using Malvolio, a character with clear flaws, Shakespeare adopts the Ovidian model to excite contradictory opinions, before leaving the character's conclusion undecided. The result has been centuries of debate surrounding characters such as Malvolio,

[119] Hobgood, '*Twelfth Night*'s "Notorious Abuse" of Malvolio', p. 13.
[120] Lawrence, *Shakespeare's Problem Comedies*, p. 7.

whose (mis)treatment presents them with a sort of 'unequal contest',[121] a conversation that we are still having today – indeed, 'Eche partie did applie/Good reasons to defende their case.'[122]

Perhaps there is an obvious solution to these attempts at 'neutralising' Malvolio and his treatment, and that is not to attempt it at all. Shakespeare has proven that he is more than capable of understanding and replicating the 'neutralisation' process that Jonson later perfected in his comedies, but that does not mean that every character must follow the same pattern and receive the same treatment. Furthermore, because he is so familiar with 'neutralisation', why go to such lengths to create a character like Malvolio, whose humanity has provoked adaptations, debates, and academic articles for centuries? If his intention was to present an audience with the perfect stooge for the gulling, then why not make him more two-dimensional, and why punish him further than a 'festive comedy' suggests is traditional? When Rhodes dismisses the concept of a 'problem play', he does so understanding the wealth of characters that Shakespeare has created, knowing that each one presents problematic aspects of their own. The answer to this conundrum is not to dismiss them as imperfect, or attempt to justify their flaws or their treatment, but to view them as they are, as complex, and to accept that. Malvolio presents us with one of Shakespeare's most enduring examples of a character so vivid and profound that he defies classification and begins to live a life beyond the confines of *Twelfth Night*. Not only does Shakespeare create an anti-theatrical, anti-festive character during the 'culture wars' of the Elizabethan era, where a subsequent comparison to Puritanism would be obvious, he then gives that character the 'surplus' punishment, causing an audience to question why they choose to dislike, or sympathise with, certain characters, or how far someone should be 'punished' just for being 'objectionable'. In this sense, by resisting neat or standardised classification and characterisation, Malvolio becomes a key representative of *Twelfth Night* as a whole, a play that challenges cataloguing as either a comedy, tragicomedy, or problem comedy, instead blending elements from all three. His treatment inspires reaction because we witness an imperfect character being punished in an overzealous way, harangued by accusations we cannot be sure are entirely justified. Let us not, as Hobgood outlined, turn our backs on Malvolio, or attempt to 'neutralise' his treatment,

[121] Lamb, 'On Some of the Old Actors', p. 277.
[122] Ovid, *The. xv. Bookes of P. Ovidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis*, fol. 34ʳ.

shaming him for a second time, but embrace a character so imbued with humanity, both in his prideful negatives and his vulnerable positives, that he forces the confines of this play to swell at its seams, inspiring a 'tragic interest'[123] in audiences for centuries yet to come.

[123] Lamb, 'On Some of the Old Actors', pp. 227-231.

2. Shylock
'One leg in heaven and t'other in hell!': Forced Conversions and Non-Conclusions in *The Merchant of Venice*

Unease is central to *The Merchant of Venice*. A sense of 'surplus' is prevalent almost from the beginning, because Shylock, the play's chief antagonist, is considered as an excessive component of society, an 'Other' whose cultural traditions and values, as a Jew, do not match those of the majority Christian population. Though he is still tormented by the people of Venice, his existence is 'tolerated', as he has access to a 'surplus' of money, and is, as a non-Christian, not forbidden from lending it out. In this sense, he has 'value' to society. However, it is a 'surplus' of sadness which is introduced to us first, long before Shylock has come on stage. Antonio, the titular merchant of Venice, is the first to speak, and does so not just about his sadness, but also the mystery surrounding it:

> In sooth I know not why I am so sad.
> It wearies me, you say it wearies you;
> But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
> What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
> I am to learn.
> And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
> That I have much ado to know myself. (I. 1. 1-7)[1]

Though sadness is hardly the dominant emotion of the play, Antonio, as John Middleton Murry put it in his mid-twentieth-century study, 'supplies a background of sadness to the whole drama',[2] an echo of a dominant emotion that could be described as an anxiety. Antonio's anxiety about his own sadness both propagates and mimics the audience's questions about the origins of unease in the play, questions that will become more prominent as the play progresses. Beginning with questions is not unusual for the opening moments of a play, but leaving them unanswered, and having Salarino and Solanio hint at the potential upsets that may come later, ensures that the audience is left wondering beyond this scene. In the same way that Antonio appears to us already affected by an 'adhesive'

[1] William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. by M. M. Mahood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). All further references to *The Merchant of Venice* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.
[2] John Middleton Murry, *Shakespeare* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1948), p. 191.

sadness that he cannot identify or rid himself of, the audience will now enter the plot proper with that same 'adhesive' unease. They are 'primed'.

Salarino and Solanio both identify Antonio's sadness with his investments at sea, remarking that his 'mind is tossing on the ocean' (I. 1. 8) and that any man with such ventures would find his concentration 'with [his] hopes abroad' (I. 1. 17). Antonio is quick to dismiss such ideas, but the seed has already been planted, and the association between this sense of foreboding and the merchant's investments is not easily dismissed. Kiernan Ryan attributes Antonio's sadness to 'alienation upon the soul', the 'reward for his successful pursuit of mercantile wealth […] is a pervasive, obscure sadness',[3] though he does acknowledge that both explanations offered by Salarino and Solanio (the second being that he is in love) contain kernels of truth. Andrew Cutrofello agrees with Salarino's and Solanio's assessment that this melancholy emanates from Antonio's business ventures, but suggests that the merchant is thinking of his investment in Bassanio, an 'unbounded love' that 'might come to nought'.[4] In short, there is something fundamentally upsetting in both Antonio's personal *and* professional life, a 'surplus' of unease the obscure origins and 'adhesiveness' of which transfer to the audience and set the tone for the rest of the play, only increasing as it progresses.

Immediately upon his arrival in the play, Shylock takes advantage of the previously established anxiety regarding Antonio's ships, first demonstrating an impressive knowledge of the merchant's dealings, and then toying with the possibility of disaster: 'But ships are but boards, sailors but men; there be land rats, and water rats, water thieves and land thieves – I mean pirates – and then there is the peril of waters, winds and rocks' (I. 3. 18-21). This playfulness is the essential Shylock of the play, his essence: faux-omnipotent, knowledgeable, and gleeful at the prospect of Christian misfortune, which later manifests itself as ruthlessness as the stakes are raised. Shylock knows that the uncertainty that envelops the play is not only the result of his presence as an 'alien', but of Venetians' worries about anything economic, and he knows exactly how and when to dance on their nerves. He understands perfectly how to exploit their position as citizens of a state that prides itself on the fair application of its laws, evidenced by his supremely confident demands during the

[3] Kiernan Ryan, *Shakespeare's Comedies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 122.
[4] Andrew Cutrofello, 'The Accursed Share *and* The Merchant of Venice', in *Reading Bataille Now*, ed. by Shannon Winnubst (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2007), 223-240 (p. 230).

play's decisive trial scene: 'I stand here for law' (IV. 1. 142), 'I crave the law' (IV. 1. 202), 'I charge you by the law […] There is no power in the tongue of man/To alter me' (IV. 1. 234-8). This deliberate confidence is a fundamental characteristic of Shylock that differentiates him from *Twelfth Night*'s Malvolio. The latter presumes to possess intimate knowledge about his mistress Olivia that will better his social position by allowing him to marry her, but this mistaken awareness is used against him. By contrast, Shylock does in fact keep abreast of the play's events, evidenced by his response to Salarino's question of whether he has heard any news regarding Antonio's ships: 'There I have another bad match' (III. 1. 35). His faux-omnipotence is exactly that, however, as he is never fully aware of the details, shown when Tubal brings him the precise news of Antonio's ships, 'What, what, what? Ill luck, ill luck?', 'I thank God, I thank God. Is it true, is it true?' (III. 1. 79-81). Shylock only needs to pretend to be knowledgeable when it will benefit him, or worry his enemies, playing on the stereotype of the Jew who has infiltrated all levels of society. Despite this pretence, the difference between Malvolio and Shylock here is obvious. The steward may bulge at the seams of *Twelfth Night*, trapped within its meagre confines, but Shylock envelops *The Merchant of Venice* as an outside force.

Establishing Shylock as a character

The Merchant of Venice, written and performed less than a decade before *Twelfth Night*,[5] provides what seems to be on the surface a very similar example of unequal contest in a Shakespearean comedy. A minority figure (in this sense, a very specific minority, a Jew, as opposed to Malvolio's vague association with Puritanism) is pitted against not just a whole collection of Italian Christians, but also against his own family in the form of his daughter, who escapes from his house in II. 6 so that she can marry a Christian infidel and, by the end of the play, convert: 'I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian' (III. 5. 15). For his bond with Antonio, any default in the repayment of which he will use to demand a pound of the merchant's flesh, he is punished with the full force of Venetian law, which bends to favour the majority. At the end of the trial scene, Shylock's goods are

[5] Scholars place the date of composition and first performance between 1596-8. Salarino's reference to the San Andrés ('my wealthy Andrew' (I. 1. 27)), a Spanish galleon captured by the English in June 1596, suggests that the play was written no earlier than this date. The title was entered in the Stationer's Register in July 1598. The first recorded reference to *Twelfth Night* was in John Manningham's diary entry of February 1602, as cited in that play's chapter.

confiscated, 'For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;/The other half comes to the general state' (IV. 1. 366-7), and he is even told he must forcibly convert, '[…] that for this favour/He presently become a Christian' (IV. 1. 382-3). If there are question marks regarding how much of the joke Malvolio 'gets' at the close of *Twelfth Night*, there can be little of this ambiguity here; Shylock's defeat has been thorough, and his punishment total. He is left with nothing; not even his religious identity.

Shylock is no mere Malvolian killjoy, however, and it is important to make this distinction. Both characters inspire an 'adhesive' reaction at the moment of their 'unequal' punishment and dismissal, but Shylock's effect is allowed to simmer once he has left the stage, with the action of *The Merchant of Venice* continuing on without him for another act. This absence, as will be discussed later in more detail, has the effect of tempering Shylock's 'adhesion', creating a distinctly unique viscosity, one for which another kind of play, such as *Twelfth Night*, would not allow the space.

One of the key differences between Shylock and Malvolio is the former's intentions. Some of his earliest lines spell out these opinions exactly: 'I hate him for he is a Christian' (I. 3. 34); 'If I can catch him once upon the hip,/I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him' (I. 3. 38-9). Furthermore, the animosity between him and Antonio is clearly established from well before the play begins. Shylock reminds the merchant that he has in the past '[called] me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,/And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine' (I. 3. 103-4), to which Antonio replies 'I am as like to call thee so again,/To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too' (I. 3. 122-3). There is nothing playful about this relationship, no witticisms in the style of Sir Toby Belch or Feste. Shylock's mission is straightforwardly malicious, a revenge quest, but the way he is treated by the Christians is equally despicable. This potent combination has kept the critical debate about his character raging and has also inspired adaptations of the play for centuries. Yet, how is it possible to feel sympathy for a character who is so set on revenge? Shylock's ruthlessness, specifically his thirst for Christian blood, seems to have given him a life beyond the page, but surely this is not all that makes up his character? If Shakespeare intended to create a two-dimensional stereotype for his audience to rail against, why did he imbue him with so much complexity, employing many of the same methods he would later use when creating Malvolio? It is this complexity, as with *Twelfth Night's* steward, that will inform the subsequent discussion about 'adhesiveness' and 'surplus'.

Previous and subsequent depictions of Jews have not had quite the same lasting effect on literature. Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (1589-90) features the similarly ruthless Jew, Barabas, believed to be, in part, an inspiration for Shylock.[6] Barabas has no allegiance in the play to the Christians of Malta or the invading Ottoman forces, and will double-cross either side to gain more wealth and favour. His malice is poetic at times, as demonstrated when he is teaching his new servant, Ithamore, his despicable 'trade':

> As for myself, I walk abroad o'nights,
> And kill sick people groaning under walls;
> Sometimes I go about and poison wells;
> And now and then, to cherish Christian thieves,
> I am content to lose some of my crowns,
> That I may, walking in my gallery,
> See 'em go pinioned along by my door.
> Being young, I studied physic, and began
> To practise first upon the Italian;
> There I enriched the priests with burials,
> And always kept the sexton's arms in ure
> With digging graves and ringing dead men's knells;
> And after that I was an engineer,
> And in the wars 'twixt France and Germany,
> Under pretence of helping Charles the Fifth,
> Slew friend and enemy with my stratagems.
> Then after that I was an usurer,
> And with extorting, cozening, forfeiting,
> And tricks belonging unto broker,
> I filled the jails with bankrupts in a year,
> And with young orphans planted hospitals,
> And every moon made some or other mad,
> And now and then one hang himself for grief,
> Pinning upon his breast a long great scroll
> How I with interest tormented him. (II. 3. 176-200)[7]

Yet Barabas, like Shakespeare's own Aaron, whose 'Ay, that I had not done a thousand more' (V. 1. 124)[8] speech during the final act of *Titus Andronicus* shares a remarkable resemblance to Barabas' tirade as a minority figure plotting against wider society, has failed

[6] M. M. Mahood refers to *The Jew of Malta* as a 'persistent presence', but remarks that Shakespeare must have found the play as 'a challenge rather than a source' – depending on it at times, but, ultimately, 'holding it at bay'. M. M. Mahood, 'Introduction', in William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. by M. M. Mahood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 8.
[7] Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, ed. by N. W. Bawcutt (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990). All further references to *The Jew of Malta* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.
[8] William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Alan Hughes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). All further references to *Titus Andronicus* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.

to incite the same critical sympathy that Shylock has enjoyed. Barabas's unbridled joy in plotting against Christians and Muslims alike makes his Machiavellian position indefensible. His position is forecast by the prologue, spoken by 'Machevil', who tells the audience that Barabas' money 'was not got without my means' (PROL. 31), before hoping that the audience will not judge Barabas poorly because 'he favours me' (PROL. 35). This morally questionable position remains despite the fact that Barabas suffers from the same antisemitic Christian prejudices as Shylock, evidenced by the attitude of the Governor of Malta, Ferneze, to collecting war taxes from minorities:

> BARABAS. How, my lord, my money?
> FERNEZE. Thine and the rest.
> For to be short, amongst you't must be had.
> FIRST JEW. Alas, my lord, the most of us are poor!
> FERNEZE. Then let the rich increase your portions.
> BARABAS. Are strangers with your tribute to be taxed?
> SECOND KNIGHT. Have strangers leave with us to get their wealth?
> Then let them with us contribute.
> BARABAS. How, equally?
> FERNEZE. No, Jew, like infidels.
> For through our sufferance of your hateful lives,
> Who stand accursèd in the sight of heaven,
> These taxes and afflictions are befallen,
> And therefore thus we are determinèd' (I. 2. 55-6).

The officers then proceed to list the terms and conditions for these war taxes, including the forfeit of half of a Jew's estate, the refusal of which will result in forced conversion to Christianity.

In an essay first published in 1808, Romantic critic Charles Lamb made a direct comparison between Shylock and Barabas which makes clear the reasons for the lack of sympathy for the latter:

> Marlowe's Jew does not approach so near to Shakespeare's, as his Edward II. does to Richard II. Shylock in the midst of his savage purpose is a man. His motives, feelings, resentments, have something human in them. […] Barabas is a mere monster brought in with a large painted nose to please the

> rabble. He kills in sport, poisons whole nunneries, invents infernal machines.[9]

Yet, if humanity were the key to sympathy, then it would stand to reason that more favourable depictions of Jews would be at least as successful as Shylock. Robert Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London*, first published a decade before *The Merchant of Venice*, in 1584, notably features two usurers, a Jew named Gerontius and the Christian Mercadorus. When it becomes clear that Mercadorus will not pay back the money he owes to Gerontius, the latter remarks that lending only works when mutual trust is involved:

> So when the time came that I should have received my money,
> You were not to be found but was fled out of the countrey:
> Surely if we that be Jewes should deale so one with an other,
> We should not be trusted againe of our owne brother:
> But many of you Christians make no conscience to falsifie your fayth and breake your day.[10]

Mercadorus' unwillingness to pay his debts, even going as far as threatening to 'become a Mahomet'[11] (convert to Islam), signals the play's message that it is deceit which makes a man immoral, and not necessarily his religion. Despite the play being well known (and notorious) enough to inspire a 'rival'[12] in the form of the lost play *London Against the Three Ladies*, neither Gerontius nor the willing convert Mercadorus have come close to eclipsing Shylock. The title character of Richard Cumberland's *The Jew*, first performed in 1794, Sheva, gives his money away generously, though none can believe it is not for usury. Cumberland's altruistic Jew was clearly very popular at the time. Montagu Frank Modder has noted that '[the play] had considerable influence over the more serious drama of the period'.[13] Though undoubtedly influential in creating more favourable Jewish characters, Sheva still adheres to certain antisemitic stereotypes, such as that of the miser, with the addition of more positive traits being placed alongside those that are harmful. Perhaps for this reason, or because of

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[9] Charles Lamb, *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets, Who Lived about the Time of Shakespeare*, ed. by Charles Lamb, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), I, p. 34. Cambridge ebook.
[10] Robert Wilson, *A Right Excellent and Famous Comedy called The Three Ladies of London* (London: Roger Warde, 1584), p. 27, *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://www-proquest-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/pagelevelimage/2240904546?accountid=12117> [accessed 31st October 2022].
[11] Wilson, *A Right Excellent and Famous Comedy called The Three Ladies of London*, p. 38.
[12] E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), IV, p. 216.
[13] Montagu Frank Modder, *The Jew in the Literature of England* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1939), [n.p.], cited in: 'Notes to *The Jew*', in *The Plays of Richard Cumberland*, ed. by Roberta F. S. Borkat, 6 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982), V, p. 5.

Cumberland's own antisemitic views (Cumberland expressed his disappointment at not being given 'some token' as thanks for his work, before remarking that had he received such a token he should likely 'have been indicted for receiving stolen goods'[14]), Sheva has not lasted long in the memory. Sheva himself makes direct reference to Shakespeare's Jew, explaining that at times he has been called 'an uncharitable dog […] a blood-sucker, an extortioner, a Shylock',[15] and it took just twenty-three years for William Hazlitt to announce that 'Shakespear's malignant has outlived Cumberland's benevolent Jew'.[16]

Less well known is the German play *Nathan der Weise*, by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, the publication of which, in 1779, predates the first performance of Cumberland's play. The play uses a genuinely favourable Jewish character to preach the stance that 'no religion, at any special point in the world's history, is *absolutely* true',[17] and that it is shared humanity which we should be celebrating. Such views Lessing also expressed in some of his other publications, which resulted in 'his freedom from censorship [being] cancelled',[18] being fiercely controversial at the time. Undoubtedly a popular play in Germany, and even being produced in England as recently as the 2019 Stratford Festival in Canada, Nathan's message of religious tolerance seems more memorable than his character, or even the story (the conclusion of which, a revelation that most of the principal characters are in some way related to each other, is remarkably convoluted). Despite also utilising harmful antisemitic stereotypes, in the end Shakespeare's morally ambiguous Jew alone, it seems, has established itself within our cultural psyche, his treatment in the play producing reactions varying from King George II being 'so troubled' by the character's monstrous nature 'that he spent a sleepless night'[19] to an Englishwoman crying out several times during a nineteenth-century rendition of the trial scene 'the poor man [Shylock] is wronged'.[20]

Recent criticism has been perceptive in bringing to light this dichotomy of both antisemitism and sympathy. Working in tandem, Imran Awan and Issa Islam compare the play's depiction of antisemitism to that of modern Islamophobia in the UK, following a rise

[14] Cumberland, 'Notes to *The Jew*', in *The Plays of Richard Cumberland*, ed. by Roberta F. S. Borkat, 6 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982). p. 5.
[15] Cumberland, *The Jew*, in *The Plays of Richard Cumberland*, p. 6.
[16] William Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 202.
[17] E. K. Corbett, 'Introduction', in *Nathan the Wise*, trans. by E. K. Corbett (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1883), p. xv.
[18] Corbett, 'Introduction', in *Nathan the Wise*, p. xvi.
[19] Emily Hodgson Anderson, 'Celebrity Shylock', *PMLA*, 126: 4 (2011), 935-949 (p. 941).
[20] Heinrich Heine, 'Shakespeares Mädchen und Frauen' (1838), in *The Romantics on Shakespeare*, ed. by Jonathan Bate (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 465-467 (p. 465).

in hate crime incidents against both religions. Their efforts to highlight the 'number of similarities between the way in which Shakespeare's character is unjustifiably ostracised and the current victimisation that Muslim communities are facing in the UK' is vital in understanding the play's importance today, and such comparisons echo the muddied concept of 'aliens', which will be later discussed in relation to the early modern period.[21] By contrast, Laurence Wright considers Shylock as a point of philosophical nothingness, and an example of a smaller society being of limited use to larger civilisation, discarded at the close in much the same way that Caliban is left on the island of *The Tempest*.[22] Irene Middleton, by contrast, draws attention to performative concerns regarding the play, notably how to achieve the multiplicity of Shylock's daughter, Jessica, in performance, whose characterisation often establishes how much sympathy her father receives from the audience.[23]

It should come as no surprise that such a historically controversial play has generated critical ire directed towards performance. Elmer Edgar Stoll, writing in the first half of the twentieth century, remarks on how later productions of the play tend to make the character 'an injured human being, an outraged father', with no consideration for 'prejudices of the times, the manifest indications of the poet's purpose, and his thoroughly Elizabethan taste for comic villainy'.[24] Though Stoll recognises that Shylock's punishment is 'the heaviest penalty to be found in all the pound of flesh stories, including that in *Il Pecorone*, which served as a model for the play', he claims that Shakespeare goes to great lengths to ensure that there is no chance a 'stupid or tender-hearted audience should not laugh but grieve'.[25] Stoll's focus is entirely on the play as a comedy, and the idea that, though comedy may '[skirt] the confines of tragedy', it never goes 'philandering over the border'. Put simply, laughter is lost, as with Malvolio, when 'we look beyond or afar'[26] – or when you're 'stupid'.

Northrop Frye would likely have agreed with Stoll's focus on comedy as a genre with clear definitions. His seminal work, *Anatomy of Criticism*, originally published in 1957,

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[21] Imran Awan and Issa Islam, '"Certainly the Muslim is the Very Devil Incarnation": Islamophobia and *The Merchant of Venice*', *Muslim World*, 108: 3 (2018), 367-386 (p. 369).
[22] Laurence Wright, '"Thinking with Shakespeare": *The Merchant of Venice* – Shylock, Caliban and the Dynamics of Social Scale', *Shakespeare in Southern Africa*, 29 (2017), 17-26.
[23] Irene Middleton, 'A Jew's Daughter and a Christian's Wife: Performing Jessica's Multiplicity in *The Merchant of Venice*', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 33: 2 (2015), 293-317.
[24] Elmer Edgar Stoll, *Shakespeare Studies: Historical and Comparative in Method* (New York: G. E. Stechert & Co., 1942), p. 256.
[25] Stoll, *Shakespeare Studies*, p. 263-4.
[26] Stoll, *Shakespeare Studies*, p. 306.

depicts the New Comedy of Shakespeare's type as presenting an 'erotic intrigue between a young man and a young woman which is blocked by some kind of opposition, usually paternal'.[27] *The Merchant of Venice* follows this pattern in three ways: the process by which Portia must select a husband was designed by her now deceased father to impose his will from beyond the grave; Shylock blocks the romance between his daughter Jessica and the Christian Lorenzo; and, as Judaism precedes Christianity, thereby having a somewhat paternal connection, Shylock opposes the choices and actions of the general Venetian populace. However, Frye continues by saying that 'the forces thwarting the hero are in control of the play's society',[28] when it can surely only be said that Shylock is control of the immediate bargain between him and Antonio, as he is clearly an outsider to society.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, the 'hero' (a term which could be credited to either Antonio or Portia, or Bassanio, or even Shylock, depending on how one values their centrality, though, in either case, the nature of the play makes this a difficult attribution) is clearly on the same 'side' as those that control society. Furthermore, Frye states that the hero is 'seldom very interesting', such as in Bassanio's case, though the action moves naturally towards the 'incorporation of the hero into the society that he naturally fits',[29] which does not seem to match Antonio's trajectory as a protagonist who is left with nothing more than that with which he started, already being a respected member of society. Antonio fulfils Frye's further description of the hero in a comedy, 'superior neither to other men nor to his environment',[30] but his lack of agency throughout far from assists in the resolution of the plot (that function being assigned to Portia during the court scene), with everything seeming to happen around him whether he wishes it or not. If a focus on character criticism leaves literature 'too open' to interpretation and adaptation, then such a scientific approach is surely 'too restrictive'.

In general agreement with Stoll and Frye is Gorman Beauchamp, who, writing in 2011, takes to task the issues surrounding Shylock's forced conversion, a Shakespearean invention not present in his source material.[31] This addition Beauchamp refers to as 'the

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[27] Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, ed. by Harold Bloom (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 44. HEB ebook.
[28] Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, p. 44.
[29] Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, p. 44.
[30] Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, p. 34.
[31] Shakespeare's likely source for the 'pound of flesh' plot is a short story in Giovanni Fiorentino's collection *Il Pecorone* (1558), in which a merchant, Ansaldo, finances his godson's quest for love by promising a pound of flesh to a Jew. The familiar court scene ensues, and the Jew is left with nothing of the original ten thousand ducat loan.

greatest act of kindness and mercy that [Antonio] could have possibly rendered his tormentor […] At least in the Globe, in the 1590s'.[32] Beauchamp posits that Shakespeare's audience, one of a faith that is 'militant, hegemonic, supremely self-confident', is in direct antithesis with Christianity of today, 'accomodationist, ecumenical, rather-ashamed-of-its-past humanitarianism',[33] and that this shift in attitude on our part as an audience is partly responsible for our sympathy for Shylock. By amputating the Christian attitudes of the time, we are left with 'today's gimpy Martyrdom of Shylock'.[34]

Though both Stoll and Beauchamp place an unaltered or unadapted text at the forefront of their discussion, and while it is perfectly reasonable for them to suggest that such a text should have critical primacy, this level of resistance to all adaptation, or even to the notion that current performance and interpretation could legitimately read Shylock's ending as problematic, regardless of whether it is for literary or dramatic purposes, threatens to stifle debate and creativity. Claiming that 'where ideal justice is to be done comedy fades away'[35] not only diminishes the comic works of a dramatist such as Jonson, who, as discussed in the previous chapter, goes to great lengths to balance the fate and punishments of his characters, but also attempts to place strict limits on what is and is not 'funny' to an audience of any given era, something which is highly subjective. When Beauchamp, ponderously dancing around his point, asks whether or not 'today's African-American Christians [should] give thanks for the "mercy" of the slave traders, who, however incidentally, brought their chained ancestors to salvation, spiritually speaking', what he refers to as a '*felix dolor*',[36] or 'happy pain', he allows the discussion about textual accuracy to get lost amongst assorted contentious musings. Lowering his argument to such *reductio ad absurdum* as lamenting (jokingly or not, it matters little) that the only innovative action left for a production of *The Merchant of Venice* would be to project a swastika over the stage during the court scene whilst 'strains of "The Horst Wessel Song" waft up from the canals below',[37] he cynically betrays the *real* subject of his essay, one that has often overshadowed critical work about the play for decades: sensitivity to political correctness in

[32] Gorman Beauchamp, 'Shylock's Conversion', *Humanitas*, 24 (2011), 55-92 (p. 55).
[33] Beauchamp, 'Shylock's Conversion', p. 58.
[34] Beauchamp, 'Shylock's Conversion', p. 92.
[35] Stoll, *Shakespeare Studies*, p. 308.
[36] Beauchamp, 'Shylock's Conversion', p. 57.
[37] Beauchamp, 'Shylock's Conversion', p. 83.

the current age. When Beauchamp bemoans the unavoidable presence of an uncomfortable antisemitism in modern productions of the play, he inadvertently puts himself on similar ground to those such as Arnold Wesker, whose own version of the play was the result of recognising the play's unavoidable and 'irredeemable anti-semitism'.[38]

The intention of Beauchamp's essay is to recover the discussion of *The Merchant of Venice* from over-sensitive debates about over-sensitivity. Yet, by looking at the unequal forces that Shylock is matched against, it becomes possible to examine the unique complications that the character presents when discussing balance and 'surplus', such as his ruthless attitude towards the Christians, and how they respond to it. *The Merchant of Venice* is perhaps unique in Shakespeare's oeuvre in how it has provided a point of reference for events in history both centuries before and following its publication, and it speaks volumes about the depth of Shylock's characterisation that he has become one of the few Shakespearean characters, alongside Falstaff, who has taken on a rich life of his own beyond the play, becoming the very epitome of 'adhesiveness'. It is because of this afterlife that examining Shylock remains an almost unparalleled starting point for discussing a play that has only grown with importance on page, stage, and screen.

Historical forced conversions

Before looking at the particulars of the play, it may be fruitful to focus first on the historical relevance of the most contentious element of Shylock's punishment. In the final moments of Act IV, Antonio adds a further stipulation to the Duke of Venice's sentence, requiring Shylock to 'presently become a Christian' (IV. 1. 383). Forced conversion, as we shall see, was not an unusual punishment during the Elizabethan period, but this one line, barely acknowledged by the other characters, or even by Shylock himself, has been the source of much debate since. It is hard to agree with Gorman Beauchamp's view that this forced conversion would be seen as an act of mercy when the punishment so readily fits the character it is targeting. If Malvolio the killjoy is ushered out with laughter, then Shylock, the crudely stereotypical Jew, must be defeated by confiscating his wealth and forcing him to turn away from his faith. It therefore seems much more feasible to imagine a Renaissance

[38] Arnold Wesker, 'Preface', in *The Merchant* (London: Methuen London Ltd., 1983), p. L.

audience of a 'militant, hegemonic, supremely self-confident'[39] faith maliciously enjoying the religious transformation of a stereotypical Jewish character, rather than being thankful that he will attain salvation. This moment, the conversion, is the defeat of Shylock, not the happy salvation of his soul, and it is just as viable to imagine an audience jeering rather than cheering. He cannot be 'reborn' as a Christian without first 'dying' as a Jew. His original religious identity must first be annihilated.

One of the play's most well-known adaptations, Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant*, presents a version of Shylock who enters the bond with an Antonio, who, in this play, is a trusted friend, the potential forfeit of a pound of flesh being suggested to create a 'nonsense bond' (I. 3. p25)[40] that will 'mock [Venetian] laws' (I. 3. p26). Conspicuously absent from the court scene, however, is the forced conversion. The reasons for such an omission are unclear; perhaps Wesker was focusing more on Shakespeare's source materials, which also do not feature a forced conversion, or, perhaps because the Antonio and Shylock of Wesker's Venice are friends, it would be ill-fitting for the former to demand further punishment (though this would not stop Wesker from assigning the line to any of the other more vicious Christian characters). More likely is the possibility that Wesker removed the conversion because it was a large part of the play's 'irredeemable anti-semitism',[41] a punishment more 'appropriate' in combatting the generalised and stereotypical Jew than Wesker's more unique and realistic Shylock. Robin Russin would be in agreement with this view, citing Shylock's punishment as an example of 'legalized theft',[42] and reminding us of the final lines before the Jew's exit, spoken by Gratiano, which conflate the gallows with the baptismal font: 'Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more [godfathers/jurors],/To bring thee to the gallows, not to the font' (IV. 1. 395-6).

Both Stoll and Beauchamp list a number of historical examples of forced conversions, especially of Jews to Christianity, as a way of demonstrating the regularity of such a punishment to an Elizabethan audience, and, therefore, how numbed they would be to Shylock's own forced conversion.[43] However, this evidence conflates the mundane with the

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[39] Beauchamp, 'Shylock's Conversion', p. 58.
[40] Arnold Wesker, *The Merchant* (London: Methuen London Ltd., 1983). All further references to *The Merchant* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and page number in parentheses.
[41] Wesker, 'Preface', in *The Merchant*, p. L.
[42] Robin Russin, 'The Triumph of the Golden Fleece: Women, Money, Religion, and Power in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice'*, *Shofar*, 31: 3 (2013), 115-130 (p. 123).
[43] Stoll, *Shakespeare Studies*, p. 283 and Beauchamp, 'Shylock's Conversion', p. 61-62.

celebrated, and little or no attempt is made to address the aftermath of such punishments, or how they may have affected the communities involved. The most flagrant of these examples comes not from the Elizabethan era, but from the nineteenth century, when Beauchamp references Tsar Nicholas I's declaration that the network of schools he was setting up for Jewish 'assimilation' were intended to 'bring them nearer to Christians and to uproot their superstitious and harmful practices instilled by the Talmud'. Taking the Tsar's declaration at face value is enough for Beauchamp to assert that these schools were a method of 'assimilating Jews into Russian society, not exterminating them'.[44] The reality was, of course, very different. The schools, Cantonist Battalions, were considered to be one of the first modern examples of social engineering, 'the treatment of human beings as so much raw material'.[45] The effects of children being forcibly taken for conscription, the kidnappings often having been organised by Jewish leaders in their respective communities, were devastating:

> Many of them never survived the torture and hardship of the journey to battalions in the eastern provinces and died before reaching their destination. Those who survived were billeted in Christian homes […] and the speaking of Yiddish [was] strictly forbidden. Contrary to the regulations which explicitly permitted religious freedom in the regular military, Jewish prayer was forbidden […] During that time thousands of children were forcibly baptized while others endured beatings or starvation when they refused baptism.[46]

Not extermination, indeed. This is far from an isolated case, moreover, and there are examples from before and after Shakespeare's time, sadly even today, which exhibit the same sort of ruthless indifference in carrying out what are, taken at face value, attempts at 'assimilation', a supposed societal improvement for everybody involved.[47]

During Shakespeare's own lifetime, 'forced conversions', and the debate surrounding their morality, were not uncommon. The Tsar's military plan is not entirely dissimilar to the *devshirme*, or 'blood tax', system of the Ottoman Empire, taking place

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[44] Beauchamp, 'Shylock's Conversion', p. 60.
[45] Adina Ofek, 'Cantonists: Jewish Children as Soldiers in Tsar Nicholas's Army', *Modern Judaism*, 13: 3 (1993), 277-308 (p. 277).
[46] Ofek, 'Cantonists', p. 278.
[47] There are chilling similarities between these Cantonist Battalions and the reports that have emerged from China regarding the oppression and 're-education' of Muslim minority groups, such as the Uyghurs, in concentration camps. More information on this can be found online, and in John Sudworth's investigative piece, published by the BBC in 2018, accessible at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/China_hidden_camps> [accessed 17th July 2019].

during the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, where Christian boys aged between seven and fourteen were taken 'to be converted to Islam and then given a rigorous education and military training'.[48] Though the consequences of this system were positive for the short-term military goals of the Ottoman Empire, the 'tax in human kind was a dreaded feature […] until the late seventeenth century',[49] and it would be their unpredictable allegiances and rebellions which would contribute to the overall weakening of the empire, starting in the seventeenth century.

The scale of how unsuccessful attempts at forced conversion can be, particularly for the economy of a kingdom, is evident in the late fifteenth-century example of the Iberian Peninsula. After a war between Castile and the Moorish kingdom of Granada, Muslims in occupied territories were promised 'religious toleration'. What soon followed, however, was an attempt at forced conversion, or 'assimilation', and those who refused were expelled from their homes. Only three months later, the order was given for the forced conversion or eviction of the country's Jewish population, during which it is estimated that '20,000 lost their lives, 165,000 emigrated and 50,000 accepted baptism'. The latter would then be known as *Marranos*, the translation of which ('pigs' or 'swine') showing 'how little they were assimilated', and how few trusted their conversion, which hints at how much of a non-conclusion Shylock's forced conversion would be in Act IV.[50] In the early seventeenth century, another effort was made to 'purify' Spain, this time by expelling *Moriscos*, or Muslims living in Iberia. In the early 1600s, Cervantes wrote *El Coloquio de los Perros*, a dialogue between two dogs. One of the dogs, Berganza, says this of the *Moriscos*:

> It would be a miracle to find among their great number even one who believes truly in the holy Christian religion; all their aim is to make money and keep it once they've made it; to acquire it, they work and they don't eat; if a coin falls into their hands, and isn't short of weight, they condemn it to perpetual

[48] R. J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 33.
[49] Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, p. 30-3. Centuries later, a reverse attempt at Ottoman 'assimilation' would occur in the 1970s and 80s, when 'Pomaks' (Bulgarians who had converted to Islam) and Turks living in Bulgaria were required to take on Slav names, usually from a set list, or be punished. The so-called Revival Process (or Process of Rebirth) was officially condemned by the Bulgarian parliament in the twenty-first century, and this forced 'assimilation' was finally recognised by its proper name, 'етническо прочистване' ('ethnic cleansing'), demonstrating an understanding that forced conversion of any kind is unsuccessful and inhumane, and can never result in the desired 'assimilation' that plain tolerance can better strive for. More detail on this can be found in A Concise History of Bulgaria, p. 199 & 204-5, and
'A declaration condemning the attempt to forcibly assimilate Bulgarian Muslims', National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria [online], 28th October 2009, accessible at: <https://www.parliament.bg/bg/declaration/ID/13813> [accessed 9th July 2019].
[50] P. J. Helm, *History of Europe: 1450-1660* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1963), p. 58-9.

> imprisonment and eternal darkness; so that, always earning and never spending, they gather together and heap up the greatest quantity of money in Spain. […] They're not worn down by war or any other pursuit that taxes their strength excessively; they rob us without effort, and grow rich on the fruits of our inheritance, which they sell back to us. […] The twelve sons of Jacob who I've heard entered Egypt had increased, by the time Moses released the Hebrews from that captivity, to six hundred thousand adult males, not counting the women and children. From this you can deduce how these men's wives will multiply, since there are incomparably more of them.[51]

This eerily recognisable description, though levelled at Muslims, echoes a larger sentiment towards 'aliens' in general, and the emphasis on money especially resembles the hateful and stereotypical description of Jews, recalling the 'My daughter! O my ducats!' (II. 8. 15) scene in which Solanio recounts, truthfully or not, the moment when Shylock learns that his daughter Jessica has eloped with a Christian and taken his money. *The Merchant of Venice*'s focus on money, during both the main and sub-plots, is clearly not just the happy coincidence of setting the play in a city renowned for trade, but a reflection of a wider paranoia about the causes and consequences of accepting other cultures and religions into a largely Christian nation. It is arguable that Shakespeare's inclusion of forced conversion not only took advantage of portions of an audience who were concerned about the sincerity of the converted in light of real world examples, and the threat they posed to the economy, but also draws attention to how ineffective it is as an answer intended to be permanent.

James Shapiro and Daniel Viktus have both considered, relatively recently, what life may have been like for the recently converted, and how early modern society may have reacted to the 'threat' they posed. As Shapiro notes, the converted Jews (or 'Conversos') of the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions were troubling because of their dispersion and their ability to disguise their true religious denomination: 'Rather than stamping out crypto-Judaism, the Inquisition unexpectedly created and exported a new problem: the fear that Christians were not really Christians'.[52] In addition to this anxiety was the concern that such 'Conversos' could easily exploit 'the Christian desire to convert the Jews'[53] and gain

[51] Miguel de Cervantes, *El Coloquio de los Perros*, in *Three Exemplary Novels/Tres Novelas Ejemplares: A Dual Language Book*, trans. by Stanley Appelbaum (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2006), p. 261.
[52] James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), p. 17.
[53] Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, p. 162.

privileges to which they may not otherwise have access. Viktus uses *Othello* as his example of Shakespeare drawing on early modern anxieties about 'the loss of both essence and identity in a world of ontological, ecclesiastical, and political instability',[54] anxieties that were only exacerbated by misidentification of an individual's allegiances, evidenced by the belief by some that 'converts to Islam actually switched back and forth between religious identities'.[55]

Both Shapiro and Viktus echo the same central fear; religious conversion, or the destruction of one's religious identity, was not only impossible to police, but also resulted in early modern audiences being unable to identify religious 'others' based on the stereotypical physical characteristics on which they had come to rely. If a Jew no longer dressed and acted as a Christian thought that they might, then how should they know which religion they truly followed? Furthermore, if a Jew converts to Christianity, is there any sure way of determining whether his conversion was genuine, and not another 'trick'? Shylock, and later Jessica, pose these questions of both forced and willing conversions, and cast doubt on the idea that an early modern Globe audience would be satisfied with seeing their transformations as simply Christian 'kindness and mercy'.[56] Shapiro's and Viktus' work reinforces the idea that when the Christians of Venice decide to convert Shylock, they are attempting to destroy his existing identity, and impose their own idea of a 'safer' version of the 'alien' on him, no doubt despite knowing that such an act would be impossible, or hardly believed.

This action has consequences, however. As the philosopher Slavoj Žižek elaborates, 'if we annihilate [the alien] things get even worse: we lose all we had – even the rest which was threatened but not yet destroyed […] its absence would mean even greater trouble: total catastrophe'.[57] Our recognition of ourselves in the 'alien' results in the destruction of ourselves when we try to annihilate the identity of the 'alien'. However, as recognised during the discussion in the previous chapter of C. L. Barber's work on 'festive comedy',[58] convention dictates that the removal of the 'problem' is a necessary component of the genre.

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[54] Daniel Viktus, 'Turning Turk in Othello: The Conversion and Damnation of the Moor', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 48: 2 (1997), 145-176 (p. 146).
[55] Viktus, 'Turning Turk in Othello', p. 152.
[56] Beauchamp, 'Shylock's Conversion', p. 55.
[57] Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 2008), p. 85.
[58] C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959; reprinted 2012). ProQuest ebook.

The result is what Kenneth Gross refers to as 'a crisis that the machinery of romantic comedy fails to accommodate',[59] a conundrum that leads Northrop Frye to recognise that, though 'he disappears in the fourth act, we never quite forget him'. Frye attributes Shylock's particularly 'adhesive' quality at the point of him leaving the stage to the inseparability of 'Participation and detachment, sympathy and ridicule, sociability and isolation'.[60]

However, the Christian-Jewish tension present during this period is not the sole source of the claustrophobic unease that permeates throughout Shakespeare's play. Identifying other sources of disquiet is crucial to establishing a better understanding of Shylock's position in Venetian society. A lack of clarity surrounding who the 'main character', or 'hero', of the play is supposed to be is evident from early titles of the play. On the 22nd of July 1598, the play was entered into the Stationer's Register as 'a booke of the Marchaunt of Venyce or otherwise called the Iewe of Venyce',[61] and just two years later the first quarto edition of the play referred to it as 'The most excellent Historie of the Merchant of Venice', before mentioning the 'extreame crueltie of Shylocke the Iewe towards the sayd Merchante'.[62] Neither title is indicative of Elizabethan sympathy for Shylock, and perhaps the 1623 folio edition clears the matter up by placing the play in the 'Comedies' section, between *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It*, yet each highlights which characters are considered central: Antonio and Shylock.

The duality of Antonio and Shylock is fundamental to discussing the 'surplus' of *The Merchant of Venice*, as it seems that one cannot exist without the other. Once settled in the court room, the disguised Portia, perhaps aping the character of blind Lady Justice, asks the Duke which of the two men is the Jew, 'Which is the merchant here and which the Jew?' (IV. 1. 170), and there is something in their potential interchangeability that has inspired critical debate. Leslie Fiedler calls the play 'undeniably, *among other things*, a play about a Jew', though follows this up by saying 'there is some point in trying to repossess *The Merchant of*

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[59] Kenneth Gross, *Shylock is Shakespeare* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006), p. 121. ProQuest eBook.
[60] Northrop Frye, *A Natural Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 103-4.
[61] 'SRO4109: Entred for his copie vnder the handes of bothe the wardens, a booke of the Marchaunt of Venyce or otherwise called the Iewe of Venyce…', *Stationers' Register Online*, accessible at: <https://stationersregister.online/browser/30/10/date/ascending?filters=date_1596-1600> [accessed 3rd July 2019].
[62] William Shakespeare, 'The most excellent Historie of the Merchant of Venice', p. 1, *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://search-proquest-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/eebo/docview/2264202141/3CCEB8BACEB248EAPQ/1?accountid=12117&imgSeq=1> [accessed 18th May 2020].

Venice by reading it as if it were Antonio's play', despite him 'falling quite out of the play'.[63] The two characters are balanced in their hatred of each other, and, if we lose one, we have to lose the other. Antonio is certainly present in Belmont, after Shylock has been defeated, but, speaking less than four percent of the lines in this final act, his influence as the play's eponymous character has diminished significantly. His final lines, 'Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;/For here I read for certain that my ships/Are safely come to road' (V. 1. 286-8), are both a natural deference to the now dominant character, Portia, who was fundamental in defeating Shylock, and a dismissal of his part in the problem that they all had to resolve, that of the bond and the missing ships – his ships have returned, his use here has gone. W. H. Auden notes that if one were to remove Antonio and Shylock 'the play becomes a romantic fairy tale like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', and that if Belmont 'is made too predominant, then Antonio and Shylock will seem irrelevant'.[64] In the final act, this imbalance is exactly what seems to have happened. Both principal characters have been removed, their influence diminished, and we are left in the distinctly distant (from Venice, at least) Belmont.

The balance of Antonio and Shylock is, rather contradictorily, what seems to be the source of most of the unease throughout the play, before the two are effectively removed. Not only does the fact that Shylock reminds the Christians of their own ruthlessness scare them, which shall be discussed later, but the very fact that they are balanced so minutely threatens an imbalance. Though this chapter focuses on Shylock, one could argue that an unmistakable amount of the 'adhesiveness' of the play comes from Antonio, though this is a minor portion compared to his Jewish counterpart. It is their relationship, and their interactions with each other, which instigates the creation of unease and 'adhesiveness', and, once their story has been told and their presence is no longer required by the play, we are left with an emptiness, which manifests itself as the eerily discordant Act V. Antonio and Shylock can only exist and exit together, their dual energies expended by the younger Christians to exorcise the Jew from their lives – Antonio has served his purpose. Something which is so perfectly equipoised can only be moments away from being disrupted, a fear

[63] Leslie A. Fiedler, *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (London: Croom Helm, 1973), p. 86-90.
[64] W. H. Auden, *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays*, (New York: Vintage International, 1989), p. 221.

which is amplified when one character, Shylock, seems to actively enjoy jumping up and down on his side of the scales.

Shylock on trial

Shylock's insistence during the trial scene on the exact letter of the law recalls not just his knowledge of Venice's judicial system, but his own theological understanding of the world, his belief in Old Testament values. Douglas Anderson refers to Shylock and Portia, who has come disguised to try to resolve the case, as 'emissaries of the Old Law and the New, of covenant and grace […] Portia's New Testament morality […] Shylock's Old Testament legalism'.[65] When Portia pleads with Shylock to understand the 'quality of mercy' (IV. 1. 180) and to allow for the presence of a surgeon to prevent Antonio from dying, as a 'charity' (IV. 1. 257), he is obstinate in his rebuttals. Portia's New Testament language soon changes meaning, however, when the legal loophole is revealed, and phrases such as 'Thou shalt have more justice than thou desirest' (IV. 1. 312) and 'The Jew shall have all justice' (IV. 1. 317) adopt a more sinister tone. Gratiano provides the literal translation of Portia's new meaning, when his response to her question of 'What mercy can you render him, Antonio?' (IV. 1. 374) is his wish to provide Shylock with nothing more than a 'halter gratis' (IV. 1. 375), or a 'noose, for free'. The punishment soon becomes what Valerie Forman refers to as a 'mercifixion',[66] where the receiver of mercy is also the receiver of punishment: unlike Christ, Shylock 'repays the debt and is the recipient of mercy'.[67] It is at that point, during the sentencing, that the 'unequal contest' – previously seeming to be in Shylock's favour – becomes most clear.

'Justice' in this case has changed its meaning, from the 'assignment of deserved reward or punishment',[68] to a simple case of revenge, 'satisfaction obtained by repaying an injury or wrong'.[69] Though the two definitions seem similar, an audience understands that when justice is meted a certain level of equity must be achieved, which is visible when

[65] Douglas Anderson, 'The Old Testament Presence in *The Merchant of Venice*', *ELH*, 52: 1 (1985), 119-132 (p. 122).
[66] Valerie Forman, *Tragicomic Redemptions: Global Economics and the Early Modern English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2008), p. 41. ProQuest ebook.
[67] Forman, *Tragicomic Redemptions*, p. 41.
[68] 'justice', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], accessible at: <https://www-oed-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/102198?rskey=qUzHYa&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 27th August 2019].
[69] 'revenge', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], accessible at: <https://www-oed-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/164716?rskey=g9GMjc&result=1#eid> [accessed 27th August 2019].

dramatists such as Jonson balance the circumstances of his characters at the ends of his plays – perfect justice must surely be free from emotional interference. Justice must be blind of any prejudices, whereas revenge is specifically targeted, often to the point of missing crucial information that might sate the desire to act. Revenge is also more closely associated with tragedy, where there are often no attempts made at maintaining a judicial balance, though this outright rampage is sometimes the revenger's initial intention. Roman curse tablets, such as the Bath tablets discovered in the 1970s and 80s, reflect this imbalance between crime and punishment. Directed towards thieves, the tablets ask the appropriate gods for divine intervention:

> The person who has lifted my bronze vessel is utterly accursed. I give (him) to the temple of Sulis, whether woman or man, whether slave or free, whether boy or girl, and let him who has done this spill his own blood into the vessel itself.[70]

Other punishments for such thefts were even more extreme, varying between 'loss of mind and eyes; loss of blood and/or life; loss of sleep and/or children; loss of ability to eat, drink, defecate, and urinate; blindness and childlessness; cloud and smoke'.[71] Such malicious imbalance is the key defining feature that sets revenge apart from justice, and it is that which takes hold of the court scene once Shylock has rejected Portia's calls for mercy and their definitions of 'justice' change.

An audience may be tempted to feel sympathy for Shylock during the opening scenes of the play, when he reminds Antonio of the persecution he has suffered at his hands (I. 3. 98-121), but Shakespeare balances that by having Shylock express his darkest anti-Christian sentiments, 'If I can catch him once upon the hip,/I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him' (I. 3. 38-9). Shakespeare clearly goes to great lengths to make sure that we remember that he is not without fault, balancing the hateful acts of Christians with those of the Jew. Shakespeare's skill at equalisation and balance here has been remarked upon by Robert Bridges:

> He had, as it were, a balance to maintain, and a fine sense of its equipoise: if one scale descends, he immediately throws something into the other, and though he may appear to be

[70] John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 194.
[71] Gager, 'footnote '78. The formula…'', in *Curse Tablets*, p. 194-5.

> careless as to what he throws in, he only throws in such things as he knows he may be careless about.[72]

This image of the weighing scales is, of course, perfect for *The Merchant of Venice*, reminding us not only of the pound of flesh and of Lady Justice, but also of the balancing act that both Shakespeare and the characters are attempting to maintain. However, it can be posited that there are two sets of scales at work in the play. One is the economic and social balance of Venice, and the other is of judicial balance. It is because of an imbalance with the latter that the feeling of 'adhesiveness' persists throughout the play's final act, when Shylock is no longer on stage.

Being uniquely aware of Venice's financial comings and goings, Shylock recognises that there are balances at work that interact with his own fate, even if he does not describe them explicitly as weighing scales. One of Shylock's most famous speeches comes in Act III, the 'Hath not a Jew…' response to Salarino and Solanio's questioning:

> I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge! The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction. (III. 1. 46-57).

This speech is often referred to as an example of Shakespeare compelling us to feel sympathy for Shylock, by relating our own humanity to his and expressing that we are all the same beneath our surface differences. Though this sentiment may be true to an extent, it is impossible to ignore Shylock's point at the end of the speech, as his desire for revenge through villainy is spelled out clearly, and echoes similar sentiments expressed earlier in the play. He uses his shared humanity with the Christians of Venice as an excuse for

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[72] Robert Bridges, 'The Influence of the Audience on Shakespeare's Drama', in *Collected Essays &c. of Robert Bridges,* 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), I: *Nos 1-10, 1927-1932* (1927), p. 28.

ruthlessness, reducing 'human nature' down to base desires like revenge, rather than acting with kindness or forgiveness. The two concepts together demonstrate Shylock's mastery of the situation, as the larger humanity/revenge balance is amplified by a series of minute balances and antitheses, 'If you […], do we not […]?', that stand almost exactly at the centre of his entire rhetorical response as a literary balance sheet. Syntactically, Shylock is an expert at balancing the weighing scales, a reflection of his business as a moneylender, and a linguistic acknowledgement to the 'Pay this, owe that'[73] attitude by which he lives his life. It is this appreciation of 'neutralisation' that ultimately fuels his desire for revenge, partly as a response to Christian aggression.

However, if it is to be argued that Shylock chooses his words very carefully during this speech, then it is hard to ignore his choice of 'revenge', rather than a word that continues the theme of 'balance', such as 'justice'. He states that the justice the Venetians should be seeking will in fact take its form as revenge when dealing with him as a Jew and an 'alien', and thus it will be an unequal or 'surplus' reaction. With this knowledge, he readily accepts himself as an 'alien', making a virtue of necessity, if it means that he can also consider them as 'alien' in a reverse scenario, so that he may 'better the instruction'. By openly recognising the actions of Christians against him as 'villainy' and 'revenge', rather than justice, Shylock prepares himself and the audience for his same adoption of these terms. It is a balance, if you will, of 'surplus', 'If this, then that'.[74]

From this perspective, the case could be made that Shylock represents a negative or mirror image of the Christians of the play, constantly being opposed to them but only ever acting out what they have done before. Parallels in a similar vein to this one are discussed at length by Žižek in his twentieth-century study *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, which, in this case, uses the term 'Other' to denote 'alien':

> […] his external position *vis-à-vis* the Other (the fact that he experiences himself as excluded from the secret of the Other) is internal to the Other itself. […] the very feature which seems to exclude the subject from the Other (his desire to penetrate the secret of the Other – the secret of the Law, the secret of how the Jews…) is already a 'reflexive determination' of the Other;

[73] Emma Smith, *This Is Shakespeare* (London: Pelican Books, 2019), p. 106.
[74] Smith, *This Is Shakespeare*, p. 106.

> precisely as excluded from the Other, we are already part of its game.[75]

The 'alien' in Venice is a 'surplus' to society, then, in that he is different, an 'Other', but he cannot be assimilated, even though he behaves in an almost copycat fashion to the Christians, an eager student of their 'villainy'. This similarity is perhaps what scares the Christians (or any other prejudicial group of the real world) the most. Shylock's ruthlessness is, at times, indistinguishable from their own, despite his other behaviours being labelled as stereotypically Jewish. Antonio reminds his friends during the trial scene just how inextricably separate he believes they are from a Jew:

> I pray you think you question with the Jew.
> You may as well go stand upon the beach
> And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
> You may as well use question with the wolf
> Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb
> […] You may as well do anything most hard
> As seek to soften that – than which what's harder? –
> His Jewish heart. (IV. 1. 70-80)

Despite this, Shylock reminds them too much of their own misdeeds, as he continuously seeks to 'better their instruction' (III. 1. 57). Their response is to attempt to destroy the 'surplus' in their society, which they attempt to achieve by eliminating his identity through the medium of forced conversion. Wesker may have elided the forced conversion in his retelling of the play, but when his Shylock is stripped of his precious collection of tomes, a similar consequence is obtained and the Jew has part of his identity taken from him, as Antonio recognises: 'You take his life when you take his books' (II. 6. p79). These destructive actions leave the audience with two questions at the conclusion of either Shakespeare's or Wesker's plays: When an audience leaves the theatre thinking about Shylock, what does this application of 'adhesiveness' mean for the world after *The Merchant of Venice?* And how does their own immediate world react to the problem of a character who cannot be neatly accommodated into what they believe is proper society?

The first of these questions has been frequently considered already. Shylock's last words in the play are a request to leave the courtroom, 'I pray you give me leave to go from

[75] Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, p. 70-1.

hence;/I am not well', and a resignation of defeat, 'Send the deed after me/And I will sign it' (IV. 1. 391-3). It is unclear how Shylock could proceed from this point, having 'the means whereby I live' (IV. 1. 373) taken from him, though it is hard to imagine a Jewish convert gaining much favour in Venice after what he conspired to do to Antonio, and, unlike Malvolio, there is no inner circle to which he can return if he simply 'gets over' what has occurred; no 'Olivia' to be reconciled with. Wesker's Shylock has him wonder about a return to Jerusalem, to 'Join those other old men on the quayside, waiting to make a pilgrimage, to be buried there' (II. 6. p82). Though this Shylock has resigned himself to waiting for death, the Shylock of *The Lady of Belmont*, written in the early twentieth century by Irish dramatist St. John Ervine, takes a different approach.

Taking place ten years after the events of Shakespeare's version, and perhaps as a reflection of the duality of Antonio and Shylock, Ervine's Antonio seems to be the only character who remains interested in what happened that day, to a borderline obsessive extent, reflecting the aforementioned intrinsic link between Shylock and the merchant, proving that he cannot function properly without his old nemesis. This is much to the exasperation of the others, who clearly believe that, without Shylock, Antonio is utterly boring:

> NERISSA. Indeed, Antonio, I know the story only too well.
> ANTONIO. A pound of flesh! Nearest my heart! Here! This very spot! I'll show it to you!
> [*He begins to unfasten his doublet.*
> NERISSA. I beg you, no! I have seen it many times before, and I have a nervous heart.[76]

Though Lorenzo and Jessica seem happy in their marriage, so long as Jessica remains steadfastly a Christian, in this play the marriages of Portia to Bassanio and Nerissa to Gratiano are fraught with tension and conflict, no doubt a continuance of the faithfulness/two rings sub-plot established in Act III of Shakespeare's original, during which Portia and Nerissa give Bassanio and Gratiano two rings which they must never 'part from, lose, or give away' (III. 2. 172), though that is exactly what they go on to do. When Shylock arrives in Belmont, it is clear his fortunes have fared a little better than we might have

[76] St. John Ervine, *The Lady of Belmont* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1923), p. 12.

expected, as he claims that when Antonio 'insisted on [his] christening' he became a 'citizen of Venice, and not an alien Jew any more'.[77] Furthermore, he has become much favoured by the Duke, and has regained a large amount of his riches. This is despite the fact, as it is later revealed, that Shylock has only been pretending to be a Christian, making Ervine's characterisation a particularly prescient example of what James Shapiro would describe as 'how easily the Christian desire to convert the Jews could be exploited by a Jew cunning enough'.[78]

Despite how Ervine's Shylock may seem on the surface, however, the effects of having his identity destroyed remain present. In Shakespeare's original, the riches that were not taken away on sentencing are promised 'Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter' (IV. 1. 386) once he dies. Presumably the sentence for Ervine's Shylock remains the same, and so all of the riches that he has built back up will eventually be left to Lorenzo and Jessica, the latter of which has since abandoned any love she may have had for him: 'You were too hard, father. I could not love you […] I did not love you, father. I cannot love by rule, but as I'm swayed'. Additionally, Shylock is still assaulted by remarks regarding his place in their society, despite his conversion, with Antonio (who, incidentally, seems to have traded northern Italy for northern England) referring to him as 'A half-and-half sort of a Christian, with one leg in heaven and t'other in hell!'[79] After they trick Shylock into attending a mock court scene mimicking the original, the Christians subject him to more abuse, this time with Bassanio remarking that he 'could not keep his faith, but went shivering to a Christian Church, lest he should lose his money or his life'.[80] Their disdain for his conversion, forced as it was by their own judicial system, is a sign of their recognition that Shylock's 'surplus' – that is, his 'alien' identity in their society – still exists. Just as in the historical examples illustrated earlier, forced conversion has not been enough, for either Shylock or the Christians. Ervine's Shylock, tormented during the mock trial, relents, revealing his true identity:

> SHYLOCK. I am a Jew. I keep our holy Sabbath in my heart.
> By law, I am a Christian, made to kneel in a Christian church,
> but in my heart, beneath my Christian cloak, I am a Jew!...

[77] Ervine, *The Lady of Belmont*, p. 38.
[78] Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, p. 162.
[79] Ervine, *The Lady of Belmont*, p. 42-4.
[80] Ervine, *The Lady of Belmont*, p. 67.

[*He throws off his rich garment and reveals his Jewish gaberdine.*[81]

This revelation perfectly echoes Shapiro's comments that early modern audiences were concerned 'with the fear that Christians were not really Christians',[82] and that a true identity can never be completely destroyed by forced conversion. Bassanio's reference to Shylock using conversion to avoid death makes clear what they believe the only acceptable response should have been: his bodily annihilation.

With Ervine's interpretation of what the sequel of *The Merchant of Venice* may have looked like, Žižek's words on identity destruction are echoed. Even though their success was only partial (Shylock as 'alien' still exists, despite the conversion), their lives have still been affected because of the attempt, their own identities suffering. Some of Ervine's characters clearly believe that Shylock's death may have been the only answer they should have considered, but the effects this action may have had in turn on their identities would surely have been even more significant, as perhaps would be the case for Shylock's identity had he successfully killed Antonio. In Žižek's collection *Interrogating the Real*, he discusses the paradoxes of the Jews and the communists. Of the conceptual Jew, Žižek writes that 'the more you ruin him empirically, the more they are killed, the more they acquire some kind of spectral, fantasmatic presence which is all-powerful', and of the communists, '[the government] claim that although the communists have lost power, the more invisible they are, the more they are the all-powerful, secret power who really have all the power in their hands'.[83] These paradoxes highlight the catch-22 of the Venetian situation of how to deal with somebody who reminds them so much of their own selves, who understands their hypocrisy, and whose total removal would require a resolution that proves he was right all along about them. The real bond of *The Merchant of Venice* is not the transactional one formed between Antonio and Shylock, but the psychological bond that the Jew holds over the Christians, one which will either paralyse them with inaction or inspire them to attempt, vengefully, to destroy his identity, even at the cost of their own.

The absence in Act V

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[81] Ervine, *The Lady of Belmont*, p. 69.
[82] Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, p. 17.
[83] Slavoj Žižek, *Interrogating the Real*, ed. by Rex Butler and Scott Stephens (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), p. 80.

All answers to what may happen to the Venice which continues after the *The Merchant of Venice* concludes can only be speculative, based on attempting to establish a pattern which follows on logically from the play's final moments. However, how Shylock's 'surplus', as both an overzealously punished character and a recently converted Jew, affects the immediate world is a more fruitful avenue of exploration. Valerie Forman, when writing of the economic world of *The Merchant of Venice*, hints at the concept of Shylock as 'surplus', and the 'adhesive' quality this may create. She remarks that, at the close of the play, 'no tension has been resolved; it has only been eliminated', so the play ends 'strangely; after so closely intertwining the strands of its plots […] leaving Shylock behind'.[84] This comment on the play's ending echoes those made about *Twelfth Night* after Malvolio has left the stage swearing revenge: how certain characters 'put the gay music of these comedies a little out of tune'.[85] Though Shylock has been stripped of everything he owns, 'the value he embodies' being 'transferred to the remaining characters',[86] he still remains, not being entirely annihilated or assimilated. The end result, what the 'adhesiveness' creates (or what an audience is 'adhering' to), is an emotive response. Despite his intentions, Shylock manages to inspire some sympathy. What remains of the Jew is a shell of who he once was, his cultural and religious identity attacked by forces with which he cannot contend, and his very self reduced to a level that his oppressors may deem satisfactory for his readmission into society and the reattribution of his rights as a citizen of Venice. We see Shylock reduced 'to property',[87] not because Shakespeare's choice of setting is so grounded in trade, but because of the 'mentality that reduces all persons, all value, to economic terms'.[88] Venice, and by extension, Venetian law, is not the antagonist: the Venetians themselves, and their interpretation of the law, are to blame. When Shylock believes he understands the legal machinery of this mercantile society, he misunderstands the Christians' willingness to operate outside of that system, or to change the rules completely.

Seeing the play as a series of transactions, or as botched attempts at 'balancing' one side of an equation, is fundamental to understanding the world that Shakespeare has created, one that focuses prominently on economic and mercantile matters. The outrage

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[84] Forman, *Tragicomic Redemptions,* p. 47.
[85] Logan Pearsall Smith, *On Reading Shakespeare* (London: Constable & Co, 1933), p. 96.
[86] Forman, *Tragicomic Redemptions*, p. 47.
[87] Regina Mara Schwartz, *Loving Justice, Living Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 73.
[88] Schwartz, *Loving Justice, Living Shakespeare*, p. 80.

towards 'aliens' selling back the fruits of Christian industry, as outlined by Cervantes, echoes attitudes towards usury, the practice of charging interest on loans, both at the time the play was written and in the play-world of *The Merchant of Venice*. Usury, a practice which David Hawkes describes as 'far more important to the people of early modern England than one might imagine',[89] affected more than just the economic sphere. It was considered by the vast majority of Renaissance England to be 'immoral and antisocial',[90] though, because a strict definition could not always be agreed upon, there was still some debate over whether it should be permitted out of necessity for economic growth. In fact, usury was considered to be so immoral, and so intrinsically linked with Judaism, that any Christian taking part in the practice would be considered as a Jew, albeit as a figurative one, and one that is worse than an actual, empirical Jew (a point which Robert Wilson explores in the aforementioned *The Three Ladies of London*). Thomas Wilson makes this stance very clear in his sixteenth century treatise on usury:

> And for thys cause, [the Jews] were hated in England, and so banyshed worthelye, wyth whome I woulde wyshe all these Englishemen were sent, that lende their money or other goods whatsoeuer for gayne, for I take them to be no better then Jewes. Nay, shall I saye: They are worse then Jewes.[91]

However, Amanda Bailey discusses *The Merchant of Venice* as a play about debt, rather than usury, framing Shylock's bond within the context of the early modern debtors' prison: 'the debtor, like all other prisoners, was expected to pay his way […] Unless someone came to the debtor's aid, imprisonment was perpetual. The destitute relied on scraps from the almsbasket and were housed in an open dirt pit, known as the "Hole", where they would likely die of starvation or "gaol-fever"'.[92] Shylock's insistence on adding the pound of flesh clause to the contract allows him to bypass Antonio being freed from debtors' prison through the generosity of his wealthy friends (no doubt Portia, offering 'thrice thy bond' (IV. 1. 230) during the court scene, would have no qualms about paying for Antonio to be released from debtors' prison). The indebted Antonio finds himself 'wrenched

[89] David Hawkes, *The Culture of Usury in Renaissance England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 1.
[90] Hawkes, *The Culture of Usury in Renaissance England*, p. 2.
[91] Thomas Wilson, *A Discourse Upon Usury* (1572), fol. 37^{v}, *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://www-proquest-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/docview/2240910855?pq-origsite=primo> [accessed 31st October 2022].
[92] Amanda Bailey, *Of Bondage: Debt, Property, and Personhood in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), p. 54. ProQuest ebook.

from familial, social, and economic affiliations, and in this respect [he assumes] the denigrated status of the slave',[93] with his death being the only possible avenue for being released from the bond. Whereas Shylock sees this interpretation as the opportunity to do what he wishes with his new property, he underestimates the inventiveness of the Christians in establishing a counter. Their argument about 'waste', 'if thou dost shed/One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods/Are by the laws of Venice confiscate/Unto the state of Venice' (IV. 1. 305-8), highlights the early modern slave's status as '*quasi* property',[94] the ownership of which belongs first to God and the monarch before it does to the debtor or creditor. In the same way that the Christians are affected by the 'surplus' when trying to destroy Shylock's identity, the Jew is defeated by his wish to destroy his enemy physically.

When the Christians gain goods from defeating Shylock, there is still something of him left behind, a 'surplus' that neither courtroom nor conversion can remove. Theodore Leinwald touches upon this concept in his late twentieth-century study, referring to indebtedness as 'not […] a zero-sum game',[95] and as something that 'may stimulate multiple affects and often one more readily than another'.[96] It may seem as though a resolution more akin to being 'zero-sum' could have been achieved if a more level-headed Shylock had accepted the offer of 'thrice thy money' (IV. 1. 230), but this outcome is a proposal that can never truly satisfy the parties involved, their actions at this point being fuelled almost entirely by emotion. Shylock's lust for righting the wrongs he believes have been levelled at him by Christians cannot be bought off with ducats, and the Christians' rooted prejudice against 'aliens', arguably, can also never be eliminated.

Emma Smith recognises the way Venetian society uses Shylock as a scapegoat for both his and its conflation of the emotional with the financial, a 'convenient personification of the play's fiscal energies'.[97] These 'fiscal energies' are what Shylock understands so well, and it is this comprehension that the Venetians seem to fear most about him, a reflection of Elizabethan society's anxiety about 'aliens' and their effect on the respective country's economy. During Antonio and Shylock's first meeting in the play, the merchant makes

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[93] Bailey, *Of Bondage*, p. 9.
[94] Bailey, *Of Bondage*, p. 63.
[95] Theodore B. Leinwald, *Theatre, Finance and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 2. ProQuest ebook.
[96] Leinwald, *Theatre, Finance and Society*, p. 3.
[97] Smith, *This Is Shakespeare*, p. 107.

specific references to his counterpart's understanding of financial matters, relating his usury to the more morally acceptable practice of farming: 'Was this inserted to make interest good?/Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?' (I. 3. 86-7); 'If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not/As to thy friends, for when did friendship take/A breed for barren metal of his friend?' (I. 3. 124-6). Shylock occupies the only 'professional expression of a more thoroughgoing speculative economy', and so he 'must carry the ethical can',[98] as Smith puts it, so that the Venetians can continue their business guilt-free. Shakespeare makes it clear that the society in which the characters exist is just as involved in economic 'misdeeds' as Shylock's moneylending business, with Bassanio telling Antonio how he has 'disabled mine estate/By something showing a more swelling port/Than my faint means would grant continuance' (I. 1. 122-124). Bassanio's solution to his problem is to ask for more money to woo a 'lady richly left' (I. 1. 159), explaining that such a strategy is no different from shooting an arrow in the same direction as a first that had been lost, this time paying the flight 'more advisèd watch' (I. 1. 141) lest he lose the arrow a second time.

Though economics is crucial to understanding *The Merchant of Venice* and the world in which these characters operate, it is the 'surplus' of emotions that leads to an 'adhesive' sticking with (and to) the audience. What further sets apart *The Merchant of Venice* from *Twelfth Night*, however, is that Shylock's dismissal, as opposed to Malvolio's, is not the end of the play, the final act and scene taking place in Belmont. James Edward Siemon notes that 'it is properly the success of the lovers that is at the center of Act V', and that Shylock, as the villain of the piece, 'can have no part […] [his] punishment is that he cannot come to the party'.[99] However, even if we somehow forget that Shylock ever existed, the party has uneasy undertones. The faithfulness/two rings sub-plot established in Act III comes to a close during Act V, when it is revealed that the two men have done exactly what they were told not to, and given the rings away to the two 'men' (Portia and Nerissa in disguise) who aided them during the court scene. Certainly, there is something humorous about the confrontation that follows, as the two women threaten to have the doctor and the clerk as 'bedfellows' (V. 1. 233) until their husbands can retrieve the rings, but there can be no denying the implication that the two men are untrustworthy at worst, wilfully stupid at

[98] Smith, *This Is Shakespeare*, p. 106-7.
[99] James Edward Siemon, 'The Canker Within: Some Observations on the Role of the Villain in Three Shakespearean Comedies', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 23: 4 (1972), 435-443 (p. 438).

best. This Shylock-free unease, a 'surplus' in its own right, is doubtless what helped to characterise Ervine's take on the unhappy marriages of these characters in *The Lady of Belmont*, the 'surplus' having created sufficient 'adhesiveness' for inspiration.

In Shakespeare's play, Jessica, Shylock's recently converted daughter, has little to say beyond the opening lines of Act V, but her presence is important in establishing the feeling that something is missing. Within fifteen lines, Lorenzo has brought the conversation back to her '[stealing] from the wealthy Jew' (V. 1. 15), to which she responds with 'Stealing her soul with many vows of faith' (V. 1. 18), a reference to her recent conversion to Christianity. Almost immediately upon the audience arriving at the party, they have been reminded not only of Shylock, but of the inescapable spectre of religion that haunts the play. Shakespeare cannot remove Jessica from Belmont, however, as she is now inextricably linked to Lorenzo through love, and her absence would be notable. What the play is left with is a character inserted through necessity; she has to be there, at the cost of spoiling the atmosphere of the party by reminding the audience of how uneasily Act IV ended. Her final line, less than a quarter of the way through the final act, leaves a question mark hanging over Belmont, and returns us to Antonio's 'surplus' sadness in the first act: 'I am never merry when I hear sweet music' (V. 1. 69). Though the play has now been book-ended by a character's sadness, Lorenzo's lengthy response, that 'no such man be trusted' (V. 1. 88) who 'is not moved with concord of sweet sounds' (V. 1. 84), features no reply. Jessica and the audience are asked simply to 'Mark the music' (V. 1. 88), before Portia and Nerissa arrive to change the topic of conversation. Put simply; be quiet, stop thinking, and enjoy the ride. Though talking about her sadness is her final line, Jessica's name is mentioned again in the final moments of the Act: 'There do I give to you and Jessica/From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift/After his death of all he dies possessed of' (V. 1. 291-3). In a grim twist, the Jew's punishment, his own 'bond' of sorts, has been reinterpreted as a 'deed' and a 'gift', given entirely against his will. Despite this new wording, Shylock remains omnipresent, and, though Jessica is now free of him, the two remain linked.

True to the parental example, Jessica's conversion does not result in her seamless transition into the Christian world, which leaves her merely 'defeated' as her father was. Jessica, and the audience, are left with a 'theoretical hurdle' that proves impossible to resolve: 'even if Jewish conversion to Christianity was sincere […] Did conversion really put

Jews on equal footing with foreign-born Christians seeking to become naturalized or endenized English subjects?'[100] Shakespeare illustrates this 'theoretical hurdle' perfectly with his conception of Shylock's turncoat servant and clown, Lancelot Gobbo. When in discussion with Jessica, he mocks (and warns her against?) her plans to marry a Christian by reminding her of the sin of being Jewish:

> LANCELOT. Truly, then, I fear you are damned both by father and mother; thus when I shun Scylla your father, I fall into Charybdis your mother. Well, you are gone both ways.
> JESSICA. I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian.
> LANCELOT. Truly, the more to blame he; we were Christians enow before, e'en as many as could well live one by another. This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs; if we grow all to be pork eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.

Though Lancelot's worry that the conversion of Jews to Christians will decrease the supply of pork is juvenile, having a worry at all is reflective of early modern anxiety about recent converts and their effect on the economy. His earlier soliloquy in Act II betrays more of the anxieties created by the 'theoretical hurdle' of converted Jews. Lancelot considers leaving the service of Shylock in favour of Christian company, but equates both with evil, 'I should stay with the Jew my master who – God bless the mark! – is a kind of devil; and to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend who – saving your reverence – is the devil himself' (II. 2. 17-20). Lancelot not only uncovers the feelings which recent converts such as Shylock and Jessica may experience, being the devil incarnate no matter which religious denomination they represent, but highlights the average early modern experience of being in constant fear of misidentification, and what that may mean for your soul.

Coupled with the 'surplus' and 'adhesive' left behind by Shylock at the end of Act IV, the mood created in Act V has proved impossible to ignore. Returning once more to James Edward Siemon, he makes note of the nineteenth-century productions of the play that wrongly suppressed Act V because its happy ending 'undercut the effect toward they were striving', that of a tragic and maltreated Shylock. He is, of course, entirely correct to question the logic of cutting or changing 'more than 10 percent of the play's lines in order to ensure

[100] Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, p. 165.

the full effect of an interpretation'.[101] Siemon states that the final act insists on 'social and cosmic harmony', but there is clearly something missing from this interpretation as well. Perhaps this absence is a fault of the play, or the playwright. That it cannot 'realize dramatically the end to which the symbol points'[102] is possibly a result of Shakespeare having bitten off more than he can chew by trying to 'correct' the unease created in Act IV with a happy ending in Act V. However, it is perhaps more appropriate to suggest that the unease present in both acts is deliberate, and that the act of suppressing either the happy or uneasy elements is harmful to what may have been the intended mood, one of unease and imbalance.

Shylock leaves the stage having asked more questions of society than he has answered, a likely side effect of both his stubborn nature and his skill in manipulating what others say to suit his own purposes. The result is not just that Shylock becomes seen as 'a great refuser of answers',[103] but there remains a 'surplus' once he exits, the effect of which being an 'adhesive' unease that neither the characters nor the audience can shake. As an ending, Act V deliberately plays upon the wealth of unanswered questions when Portia reveals that she and Nerissa were present during the court scene all along, and that three of Antonio's ships survived their journeys after all. Their revelations are hailed by Lorenzo as like giving the same heavenly sustenance which sustained the Israelites in the Book of Exodus: 'Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way/Of starvèd people' (V. 1. 294).[104] However, the use of 'drop' may suggest that this sustenance is paltry when compared to their need. Portia's response acknowledges their need, that, despite her manna, she is 'sure you are not satisfied' (V. 1. 296), and there are still answers which they, and the audience, seek. Further questions ('inter'gatories' (V. 1. 298)) can be charged upon the two women later, when they will 'answer all things faithfully' (V. 1. 299). For the audience, however, these answers never come. The play ends with the promise of more, but never delivers. The promised land of a happy ending, of a comic resolution, can never materialise: there is simply too much left to do, too great a 'surplus'. The toll of Act IV leaves its mark not only on the final act, but on

[101] Siemon, 'The Canker Within', p. 438.
[102] Siemon, 'The Canker Within', p. 438.
[103] Gross, *Shylock is Shakespeare*, p. 56.
[104] Exodus 16. 15: 'And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.'

the very *Exeunt* moment of the play, and so the audience leaves with the 'adhesive', i.e. Shylock, still present in their minds.

Unanswered questions are partly what inspire Emma Smith's description of the 'sheer and permissive gappiness' of Shakespeare's work, formed by his 'silences, inconsistences'.[105] It has even been argued that such 'gappiness' is an intentional feature of Shakespeare, as Robert Bridges said of Hamlet's 'madness', 'Why has there been such a question whether Hamlet was mad or only feining [sic], unless it was Shakespeare's design to make and leave it doubtful? and does not the hypothesis of such a design reconcile all?'[106] Gappiness, however, is something slightly more than unanswered questions, there being no such thing as a question that a scholar of Shakespeare has not already attempted to answer. Goethe rightly remarked in his early-nineteenth century essay 'Shakespear und kein Ende!', 'There has already been so much said about Shakespeare that it would seem that there is nothing left to say'.[107] Perhaps it would be more appropriate to refer to these issues as unanswerable questions, spaces for an audience in which to 'think, interrogate and experience different potential outcomes'.[108] Those potential outcomes are one and the same as 'surplus' and 'adhesiveness', and each one has the potential to circle back on itself, or exacerbate a different question. Just as the Venetian's answer to Shylock, to forcibly convert him and seize his goods, could not solve their problem with his 'alien' status, an audience cannot use one key to answer all the questions that *The Merchant of Venice* poses without creating more questions in the process. However, there is an optimistic note to end Goethe's comment: '[…] and yet this is the quality of the mind that it stimulates the mind forever'.[109] There is nothing to fear from Shakespeare's gappiness, or the 'surplus' answers that it provokes, as it is the unanswerable nature of these issues that keeps Shylock, as a 'famous' Shakespearean character, vital in not just academic circles, but in the public consciousness. The depth of Shylock's character, and the debate resulting from his treatment at the hands of the Christians, is, from the perspective of 'adhesiveness', the true spirit of the play. Though time progresses, the unanswerable 'Shylock question' remains.

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[105] Smith, *This Is Shakespeare*, p. 2.
[106] Bridges, 'The Influence of the Audience on Shakespeare's Drama', in *Collected Essays &c. of Robert Bridges,* p. 25-6.
[107] Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Friedmar Apel and others, 40 vols (Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994), XIX: *Ästhetische Schriften: 1806-1815* (1998), p. 637. My translation.
[108] Smith, *This Is Shakespeare*, p. 322.
[109] Goethe, XIX: *Ästhetische Schriften,* p. 637. My translation.

3. Caliban
How to be 'wise hereafter': Gracing the Monster in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

Like *The Merchant of Venice* and the forcibly converted Shylock, *The Tempest* provides us with a character who excites both sympathy and vilification. Caliban's crimes – the attempted rape of Prospero's daughter Miranda, and the plot to murder and overthrow Prospero – are obviously abhorrent (though the coup is considerably less so than the attempted rape). At least with the former, there is nothing to suggest that Caliban regrets his actions, and, if anything, he only mourns that he was stopped before he could have 'peopled else/This isle with Calibans' (I. 2. 350-1).[1] However, what persists despite these crimes is his matrilineal claim to the island, inherited after the death of his mother Sycorax (who, like Prospero, was banished from her original home, Algiers), and the commodification of his knowledge by any European that he encounters.[2] Furthermore, continuing the trend discussed in the chapters on *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare imbues Caliban with a sense of humanity, dignifying him with blank verse throughout and granting him some of the play's most poetic language. The combination of these things leaves us with a character of different modes, some of which are employed simultaneously, and some which seem completely incompatible with one another. Tom Lindsay lists these modes as 'generous and freedom-loving […] empowered and politically assertive […] obsequious and servile […] he spews harsh, visceral curses […] he uses savvy and persuasive rhetoric […] he speaks arrestingly beautiful poetry.'[3] Arguably, Caliban's humanity-through-poetry is even more prevalent than in the cases of Malvolio and Shylock, whose killjoy attitudes seem to contrast quite dramatically with Caliban's love of 'sweet airs' (III. 2. 128) and music.

In a style similar to *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*, there is 'surplus' in the final act that never gets adequately resolved. Shakespeare provides us with what seems like a 'formal conclusion to the romance narrative, the kind of summary one would expect right

[1] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. by David Lindley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). All further references to *The Tempest* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.
[2] Kelsey Ridge, ''This Island's Mine': Ownership of the Island in *The Tempest*', *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 16: 2 (2016), 231-245. The actual ownership of the island is debated. Kelsey Ridge suggests that Ariel has the strongest claim, under the 'theory of first occupancy' (p. 238), having been present on the island before Sycorax arrived.
[3] Tom Lindsay, ''Which first was mine own king': Caliban and the Politics of Service and Education in *The Tempest*', *Studies in Philology*, 113: 2 (2016), 397-423 (pp. 397-8).

at the end of a play'[4] when Gonzalo and Alonso first witness the coupling of Ferdinand and Miranda:

> GONZALO. Was Milan thrust from Milan, that his issue
> Should become kings of Naples? O rejoice
> Beyond a common joy, and set it down
> With gold on lasting pillars: in one voyage
> Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis,
> And Ferdinand her brother found a wife
> Where he himself was lost; Prospero, his dukedom
> In a poor isle, and all of us ourselves,
> When no man was his own.
> ALONSO. [*To Ferdinand and Miranda*] Give me your hands:
> Let grief and sorrow still embrace his heart
> That doth not wish you joy.
> GONZALO. Be it so, amen. (V. 1. 205-215)

Gonzalo focuses on what he believes are the highlights of the play's events, and rejoices in the sense of balance this gives him. The conclusion, as Gonzalo sees it, corrects all wrongs (the sole example tellingly being 'Milan thrust from Milan'), and sees that justness of character is rewarded. He ends his summary with a blessing, 'amen', both celebrating the happy ending and willing it into existence.

Yet, though this seems like the best possible resolution to the Ferdinand/Miranda love plot, we are immediately reminded that there is more at work on the island. Ariel enters with the remaining shipwrecked mariners, followed by Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo, who have recently been plotting to kill and overthrow Prospero. Unlike with *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*, here Shakespeare refuses to end the play with a void created by absent characters. The would-be usurpers are brought in by Ariel after Prospero's command 'Set Caliban and his companions free:/Untie the spell' (V. 1. 252-3), their lack of agency in the matter an important distinction to note. Where Malvolio's and Shylock's bitter exits and subsequent absences sour the endings of their plays, Shakespeare brings forth Caliban to provide a further neat resolution to this particular sub-plot. Caliban seems genuinely apologetic, signalling that his entire perspective has shifted regarding how he has acted and how he has been treated, 'I'll be wise hereafter,/And seek for grace' (V. 1. 292-3). Prospero suggests that forgiveness need not be as hard earned as one might expect

[4] David Lindley, 'Introduction', in *The Tempest*, ed. by David Lindley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 95.

following a plot against his life, 'Go, sirrah, to my cell;/Take with you your companions. As you look/To have my pardon, trim it handsomely' (V. 1. 289-291), though this does designate Prospero as a granter of forgiveness, once conditions are met, rather than a pardon being automatic.

Caliban's choice of words says as much about his past actions as it does those of the immediate future. Offering to be 'wise' from this point forward demonstrates his understanding that following two drunks, and getting drunk himself, was not conducive to earning Prospero's favour, or for overthrowing him. Combined with this, his criticism of Trinculo as a 'dull fool' (V. 1. 295) reflects on how he sees himself during his brief stint in their company. Furthermore, Caliban '[seeking] for grace' (V. 1. 293) completes the transformation that Prospero was likely intending for him from the very beginning of the play – he has found some belief and comfort in conventional, Christian theology. There are two possibilities regarding exactly what Caliban is seeking: 'grace' within himself, as in the Oxford English Dictionary's definition '**1d.** An individual virtue or excellence which is regarded as divine in origin', or 'grace' as gifted by Prospero, and '**2b.** Favour shown by a person; favourable or kindly regard or its manifestation (frequently on the part of a superior)'.[5] In either case, Caliban's expression does seem genuine, as, after this declaration, he does then exit the stage to deal with Prospero's belongings, as instructed, and seemingly without complaint or objection, an obsequious attitude with which the Caliban of old would never have been associated.

Jonathan Uffelman, writing about this moment from a legal angle, similarly interprets Caliban's words as genuine, but sees an 'intelligent and imaginative' character recognising that 'forgiveness might ultimately benefit him more than allowing resentment to fester in him long after Prospero is gone', and that 'grace' in this sense means 'the capacity to forgive'.[6] Whether Caliban wants to be forgiven, or is seeking to forgive Prospero, this sort of 'closure' provides much of what is missing in *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*, when their principal 'adhesive' and antagonistic characters storm off the stage, or, in Shylock's case, leave in Act IV feeling unwell, remaining absent for the entirety of Act V.

[5] 'grace', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], accessible at: <https://www-oed-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/80373?rskey=wIltqk&result=1#eid> [accessed 12th May 2020].
[6] Jonathan Uffelman, 'Caliban's Grace: A Statutory Interpretation of Shakespeare's Monster', *Seton Hall Journal of Sports and Entertainment Law*, 23 (2013), 69-124 (p. 120).

However, in terms of 'surplus' and 'excess', Caliban's ending fails to satisfy both sides of the comedic equation. Despite Caliban being wheeled out finally to express remorse and growth, the result is an unease, an 'adhesive' of a quality unlike that of either Malvolio and Shylock, but an 'adhesive' nonetheless. Samuel Johnson, in the preface to his 1765 edition of Shakespeare's works, referred to such an action as Shakespeare being 'so much more careful to please than to instruct', and that 'he seems to write without any moral purpose'.[7] An unease centred around *The Tempest* was noted by one of Shakespeare's contemporaries, Ben Jonson. A thinly veiled remark on the poor theatrical 'Customs of the Age' was made in the prologue to the folio edition (1616) of his comedy *Every Man In His Humour* (1598):

> He rather prays, you will be pleas'd to see
> One such to day, as other plays should be;
> Where neither Chorus wafts you o're the seas,
> Nor creaking Throne comes down, the boys to please;
> Nor nimble Squib is seen, to make afeard
> The Gentlewomen; nor roul'd Bullet heard
> To say, it Thunders; nor tempestuous Drum
> Rumbles, to tell you when the Storm doth come;
> But Deeds, and Language, such as men do use […]
> I mean such Errors, as you'll all confess
> By laughing at them, they deserve no less:
> Which when you heartily do, there's hope left, then,
> You, that have so grac'd Monsters, may like Men.[8]

Jonson's reference to 'grac'd Monsters' does not suggest that he has recognised the same 'adhesive' quality in Caliban as is noted in this chapter (it may only expose his opinion on whether or not a monstrous character can be educated to an 'acceptable' Western level), but it does show that he clearly believed that something was not quite right at the close of *The Tempest*, that Caliban's redemption did not fit with what we have seen of him so far. This resolution, Jonson believes, is as ill-fitting, in terms of theatrical decorum, as representing a great battle with 'three rusty swords', or having a child 'shoot up […] Past threescore years'[9]

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[7] Samuel Johnson, *The Major Works*, ed. by Donald Greene (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 427.
[8] Ben Jonson, 'The Works of Ben Jonson, Which were formerly Printed in Two Volumes, are now Reprinted in One' (London: Thomas Hodgkin, 1692), p. 6, *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://search-proquest-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/eebo/docview/2240949205/8CCC8133FEDB4F7BPQ/1?accountid=12117&imgSeq=1> [accessed 12th May 2020].
[9] Ben Jonson, *The Works of Ben Jonson*, p. 6.

in a few scenes. As Martin Butler points out, 'Jonson was not averse to monsters, so long as they appeared in places that were licensed by conventions of theatrical decorum'.[10] For Jonson, a master of consistency and 'equalising' the fates of his characters, monsters are required to act, and remain, monstrous. He believes that Caliban seeking for 'grace' (whether this be God, forgiveness, or applause) is not consistent with the monster we have been given so far, or any monster.

Post-colonial readings of the play have also clearly recognised how much of a contentious issue Caliban's 'conversion' is at the close of the play.[11] Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête*, an adaptation of *The Tempest*, makes clear that Prospero is a white slave owner, and that Caliban is a black slave. Like Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant*, Césaire omits the conversion in his version of the play, and leaves Prospero and Caliban in a state of perpetual animosity, 'Well, boy, I shall spurn my indulgent nature and, from now on, I will answer your violence with violence!'[12] Though, in both Césaire's and Wesker's cases, this may be an attempt at removing a particularly unpalatable piece of Shakespearean source material, the omission may have the unwanted effect of diluting the complexity of Caliban's ending, or providing an 'answer' to the vagueness that he carries throughout the play.

However, this unease can be traced back to long before Caliban's 'redemption' in Act V. The relationship between Prospero and Caliban, formed before the events of the play, did not start so acrimoniously. Caliban states that when Prospero and Miranda first arrived on the island, 'Thou strok'st me and made much of me; wouldst give me/Water with berries in't, and teach me how/To name the bigger light, and how the less,/That burn by day and night' (I. 2. 333-7). In response to this kindness, Caliban offered up his own knowledge, 'I loved thee/And showed thee all the qualities o'th'isle,/The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile' (I. 2. 337-9). What was clearly being nurtured before the play begins is a relationship of equality, where both sides are trading commodities of an equal value – knowledge that the other side does not possess. Arguably, Caliban's knowledge is even more immediately valuable, as it ensures the survival of the new arrivals. This exchange fosters trust in Caliban, but also increases his worth in the eyes of Prospero and Miranda,

[10] Martin Butler, '*The Tempest* and the Jonsonian Masque', in *Performances at Court in the Age of Shakespeare*, ed. by Sophie Chiari and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 150-161, (p. 154).
[11] Further examples of Caliban's impact on post-colonial readings of *The Tempest* can be found in footnote 73.
[12] Aimé Césaire, *Une Tempête*, trans. by Philip Crispin (London: Oberon Books, 2000), p. 61.

encouraging them to make 'much' of him. This relationship breaks down when Caliban attempts to rape Miranda, and subsequently shows no remorse for his actions, 'Oh ho, O ho! Would't had been done./Thou didst prevent me – I had peopled else/This isle with Calibans' (I. 2. 349-51). However, a fundamental incompatibility may have existed before this occurred.

The supply of knowledge on both sides of the equation has limits, though these limits exist at different thresholds. Caliban's knowledge of the island can only be imparted once, possibly during one conversation or tour, and thus his immediate value to the new arrivals decreases once they can fend for themselves. His worth is then measured only in Prospero's terms, as a student and a project of the self-confessed 'schoolmaster' (I. 2. 172). This value can be terminated at any time if Prospero decides to abandon the project. This is, in fact, what happens to Caliban, resulting in his revaluation as 'Caliban, my slave' (I. 2. 309). Where at first his value deteriorates through a transaction of his own choosing, what remains is then entirely erased because Prospero has willed it so, as a punishment for his actions against Miranda. Though we may appreciate the difficult circumstances in which Prospero found himself, being the only authority on the island, his weaponising of what was once a mutual transaction results in Caliban's reduction to nothing more than a 'slave'. This occurs despite Prospero knowing that this mutual and understanding relationship only exists now because he has the power to uphold it. In short, Caliban depends on him, and Prospero abuses this dependency when he feels the need to punish his 'slave'.

On the other side of the equation, the limiting threshold of Prospero's knowledge is much higher, and what he brings to Caliban cannot be so quickly depleted. Once Caliban has expended his knowledge of the island, Prospero is immediately in charge of the 'surplus' part of their relationship. What the 'schoolmaster' intentionally brings is a Western education, the completion of which would take several years even in a more traditional environment. The end goal of such an education, in early modern terms, would be to empower Caliban (had he been a European of some social standing, that is) and imbue him with enough knowledge to move towards 'intellectual achievement, independence, and political power'.[13] At the same time, almost paradoxically, he would be taught how to be subordinate and how to respect his master, a figure independent of any 'institutional

[13] Tom Lindsay, 'Caliban and the Politics of Service and Education in *The Tempest*', p. 406.

authority', and who would be expected to substitute as a 'father' figure.[14] As Tom Lindsay describes it in his work on Renaissance education, Caliban would be presented with a clear and defined hierarchy, but one that would be 'climbable', giving him the opportunity to mimic Prospero and 'display the kinds of knowledge, skills, and power that made their instructors authoritative in the first place'.[15] This is clearly more than teaching Caliban how to read and write – it is readying him for a life that Prospero would deem worth living, a life beyond (and better than) the island.

The incompatibility of this viewpoint lies in its subjectivity. To Prospero, Caliban is somebody whose life can, and should, be improved to a European standard. At the very least, he should be taught obedience. However, there is no evidence to suggest that Caliban was struggling to survive before the 'schoolmaster' arrived, and, as is shown when Caliban wishes 'the red plague rid' (I. 2. 364) them for teaching him their language, he clearly feels that his Western education has failed to elevate his standing or bring any other benefits, other than understanding when his oppressors are insulting him. Tom Lindsay sees the resulting breakdown as a total failure on Prospero's part. Where a typical schoolmaster would provide 'practically edifying work that was skill- and gender-appropriate', Caliban is made to complete tasks of physical labour that neither match his skill set nor provide him with fulfilment. Lindsay highlights the difference between what Caliban willingly offers and is clearly skilled at – showing off the island and how to exploit its resources – and what he is made to do, 'fetching firewood.'[16] At this stage, because of Caliban's rebellious attitude and his actions towards Miranda, Prospero has begun to equate education with punishment, using one as a tool for the other, though it is unclear whether any amount of menial work undertaken by Caliban could ever satisfy his new master. One key reason for why Prospero may have failed in this case is the lack of accountability for failure. In the case of early modern independent boarding schools, whose masters 'chose the curriculum and directed the school',[17] success was gauged by parental support, which came in the form of financial backing. With no parent to answer to, and no funds to rely on, Prospero has little motivation, beyond curiosity, to complete Caliban's education.

[14] Paul F. Grendler, 'Schooling in Western Europe', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43: 4 (1990), 775-787 (p. 775).
[15] Lindsay, 'Caliban and the Politics of Service and Education in *The Tempest*', p. 406-7.
[16] Lindsay, 'Caliban and the Politics of Service and Education in *The Tempest*', p. 405-11.
[17] Grendler, 'Schooling in Western Europe', p. 776.

The knowledge that Prospero gives, he believes, means that Caliban is indebted to him. Miranda expresses this sentiment when Caliban first appears on stage:

> […] I pitied thee,
> Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
> One thing or other. When thou didst not, savage,
> Know thine own meaning, but woudst gabble like
> A thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes
> With words that made them known. (I. 2. 353-8)

Miranda not only betrays how she and Prospero truly feel about Caliban, as a 'brutish' 'savage' who did not know his 'own meaning' before their intervention, but makes clear what they really expected from his education: complete subservience. Both Prospero and Miranda seem completely struck by what they see as Caliban's ungrateful attitude.

The resulting failure, intentionally on Prospero's part or not, seems more like an attempt at teaching civility and good behaviour, rather than providing something which would improve Caliban's life. Prospero's incompetence when it comes to educating Caliban is exposed by what Leslie Fiedler refers to as his love of 'study more than his official duties',[18] something which puts him alongside Duke Vincentio of *Measure for Measure*, who abdicates his responsibilities as Duke and 'disappears' so that he may observe his people in secret. In essence, Prospero recognises educating Caliban for the potential benefits it may offer him, rather than his subject. Like Duke Vincentio, the net result is, ultimately, neglect, and a haphazard resolution that satisfies some but not all.[19] Caliban's treatment as an educational experiment is at its most telling once the project has been cancelled, as he serves as a constant reminder to Prospero of his failings as a teacher and of his own general inadequacies, as Caliban's constant complaints and curses demonstrate.

The magician, of course, has two students. Where Caliban reminds Prospero of his failings, Miranda remains to remind Caliban of his. As Hiewon Shin states, 'Prospero successfully inculcates both feminine and masculine ideas in Miranda, but fails to teach Caliban the values of masculinity',[20] a viewpoint which agrees with Lindsay's

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[18] Leslie A. Fiedler, *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (London: Croom Helm, 1973), p. 224.
[19] *Measure for Measure* infamously ends with the Duke reappearing and proposing marriage to Isabella, sister of the condemned Claudio. Her silence in response hangs over the play's conclusion, an absence not dissimilar, though on a smaller scale, to the void created by the distinct lack of Shylock in the final act of *The Merchant of Venice*.
[20] Hiewon Shin, 'Single Parenting, Homeschooling: Prospero, Caliban, Miranda', *Studies in English Literature*, 48: 2 (2008), 373-393 (p. 389).

understanding that a good schoolmaster would provide 'skill- and gender- appropriate' work for his charges. Miranda's reward is not just her father's love and attention, but the ability to marry into the house of Naples, whereas Caliban must remain as a slave, perhaps indefinitely, performing menial tasks for a 'father' who thinks poorly of him. When Ferdinand arrives on the island, he gives Prospero what Caliban never could: a son(-in-law). Like Miranda, who embodies 'both feminine and masculine ideas', Ferdinand demonstrates that he can thrive in both a court and on the island when required, having training that 'resembles a courtier', but being willing to perform 'even the most menial manual labor'.[21] Not only does Ferdinand work well 'physically and mentally'[22], but he is willing and subservient, making Caliban's small but constant complaints seem all the more unappealing to Prospero.

Though Jonson may have believed that such a 'monster' is incapable of retaining education, and thereby being 'grac'd',[23] there is more to suggest that what Prospero has been most unsuccessful in is understanding what Caliban's pre-existing life consisted of, and not what a 'monster' is or is not capable of grasping. Caliban understands something of religion, believing in the existence of his 'dam's god Setebos' (I. 2. 373), and offers to share the island's resources with Trinculo and Stephano just as he did with Prospero, his willingness not entirely tainted by cynicism and mistrust. Both of these examples demonstrate knowledge that Caliban had before Prospero arrived, making it clear that he already possesses too much of his own life experiences to seamlessly adopt the more hierarchical routine that Prospero proposes. During his twenty-fourth lecture, originally delivered in the early nineteenth century, German Romantic critic August Schlegel, though working from the perspective that Caliban possesses an inner 'malignity', recognises that there is a fundamental incompatibility between student and teacher. He states that Prospero 'could only unfold his understanding, without, in the slightest degree, taming his rooted malignity: it is as if the use of reason and human speech were communicated to an awkward ape'.[24] As a result, the attempt is doomed before it begins, and the 'schoolmaster' must resort to

[21] Steven Petersheim, '"As I Am a Man": Shakespeare's Ferdinand as Renaissance Man in Training', *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 38 (2012), 77-94 (p. 77).
[22] Petersheim, 'Shakespeare's Ferdinand as Renaissance Man in Training', p. 82.
[23] Ben Jonson, *The Works of Ben Jonson*, p. 6.
[24] Augustus William Schlegel, *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, trans. by John Black (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1846), p. 395. Google ebook.

physical punishment in 'surplus' as a substitute for learning, and as a way of ensuring both obedience and the dynastic capital of his daughter's virginity.

The punishments that Prospero elects to mete out are more difficult to assess in terms of 'surplus' and 'excess' than the equivalent actions in *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*. For both of those plays, the question is about how appropriate the punishments seem in respect of the crimes Malvolio and Shylock have allegedly committed. Like Shylock threatening to end Antonio's life to settle a debt, Caliban's crime – the attempted rape of Miranda – is grave and deserves retribution of equal severity. However, the island of *The Tempest* exists not just in geographical limbo, but in a judicial one too. There are no laws to uphold, and there is no authority on the island who has been formally accepted or elected to ensure that the islanders behave. Thus, when Caliban attempts to rape Miranda, Prospero, as her father, must decide on a punishment which both satisfies his understanding of justice and which will prevent the same thing from being attempted again. Sir Thomas Elyot, writing in the early sixteenth century, proposed that classrooms become segregated by gender beyond the age of seven, so as to prevent the 'sparkes of voluptuositie: which norished by any occasion or objecte encreace ofte tymes in to so terrible a fire that ther with all vertue and reason is consumed'.[25] Confined to the island, it is clear that Prospero could not ensure such separation, and, as such, Caliban's continuous and prolonged punishments – being forced to carry out manual labour, and suffering cramps if he tarries – must act as substitute.

Corporal punishment for children was not unusual in Renaissance England. Lady Jane Grey was recorded describing the teaching methods of her strict parents in terms not too dissimilar to Caliban's description of Prospero filling 'our skins with pinches' (IV. 1. 231):

> I am so sharplie taunted, so cruellie threatened, yea presentlie some tymes, with pinches, nippes, and bobbes, and other waies, which I will not name, for the honor I beare them, so without measure misordered, that I thinke my selfe in hell.[26]

[25] Sir Thomas Elyot, 'The Boke named the Governour' (London: Tho. Bertheleti, 1531), fols 20^{r}-20^{v}, *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://search-proquest-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/docview/2264194097?accountid=12117> [accessed 2nd June 2020].

[26] Roger Ascham, 'The Scholemaster' (London: John Daye, 1570), fols 11^{r}-12^{v}, *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://search-proquest-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/docview/2240892841?accountid=12117> [accessed 2nd June 2020].

This was not the only way, however, as she then goes on to describe her schoolmaster, Mr. Elmer:

> [he] teacheth me so ientlie, so pleasantlie, with soch faire allurementes to learning, that I thinke all the tyme nothing, whiles I am with him. And when I am called from him, I fall on weeping, because, what soever I do els, but learning, is full of grief, trouble, feare, and whole misliking unto me.[27]

William Gouge, writing in the early seventeenth century, stated that 'Correction by word must goe before correction by the rod', and it is clear that Prospero's attempt at education follows this pattern, as he did attempt to educate Caliban before the latter attempted to rape Miranda. However, Gouge also states that 'Correction must be given in love […] Correction must be given in a milde moode, when the affections are well ordered, and not distempered with choler, rage, furie, and other like passions'.[28] When Prospero punishes Caliban for the attempted rape of his daughter, it seems to come from a place of anger and vengeance, rather than as a genuine wish for reform and correction. The resulting im/balance allows Prospero to exploit Caliban's labour, and provides the former with a justification for doing so.

Despite the difficulties with which Prospero may have been faced when deciding on how to punish Caliban, the measures that he ultimately decided to execute may have exceeded how an early modern audience saw 'justice'. In fact, by the very nature of their unusual circumstances upon the island, Prospero's actions become even more unjustified. Originally published in the early sixteenth century, lawyer Christopher St. Germain detailed the concept of 'equity', which, though not dissimilar to 'justice', sets itself distinctly apart:

> […] Equity taketh not away the very right, but only that that seemeth to be right by the general words of the Law: nor it is not ordained against the Cruelness of the Law, for the Law in such case generally taken is good in himself; but Equity followeth the Law in all particular cases where right and Justice requireth, notwithstanding the general Rule of the Law be to the contrary. Wherefore it appeareth that if any Law were made by a man without any such exception expressed or

[27] Ascham, 'The Scholemaster', fol. 12[v].
[28] William Gouge, 'Of Domesticall Duties: Eight Treatises' (London: John Haviland, 1622), p. 556, *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://search-proquest-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/docview/2248559962?accountid=12117> [accessed 2nd June 2020].

> implied, it were manifestly unreasonable, and were not to be suffered: for such causes might come, that he that would observe the Law should break both the Law of God and the Law of Reason.[29]

Though Prospero may be striving for 'justice' in a difficult situation, it may have been more appropriate, given the special circumstances, for him to seek 'equity', and to go against the exact law in this example of an unprecedented case.[30] As James Phillips posited in his twentieth-century study of *The Fairie Queene*, 'Exact retribution according to the letter of law was not […] the only aspect of Justice to be considered'.[31] This understanding of 'equity', and Prospero's choice to punish Caliban in what seems to be a vengeful way, calls into question just how far an early modern audience would have sympathised with Prospero's situation, and suggests that Shakespeare may have been calling attention to the 'surplus' of Caliban's treatment, even in such a complex case.

If a 'surplus' is difficult to measure when it comes to the appropriateness of Caliban's punishments, then perhaps there is some 'excess' to be found when looking at the duration of said punishments, or their unusual nature. *The Tempest* thus becomes less a debate about judicial equality, but of morality. Does Prospero have the moral high ground when he continues to give Caliban cramps, not just for the attempted rape of his daughter, but for being slow in bringing him firewood? When Caliban first appears on stage, he curses Prospero and wishes upon him 'A south-west blow on ye,/And blister you all o'er!' (I. 2. 324-5), to which the magician responds, not with a threat, but with a *promise* of violence:

> For this, be sure, tonight thou shalt have cramps,
> Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up; urchins
> Shall, for that vast of night that they may work,
> All exercise on thee; thou shalt be pinched
> As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging
> Than bees that made 'em. (I. 2. 326-31)

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[29] Christopher St. Germain, 'Two Dialogues in English, between a Doctor of Divinity, and a Student in the Laws of England' (London: Richard and Edward Atkyns, 1673), p. 53, *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://search-proquest-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/docview/2240944383?accountid=12117> [accessed 20th July 2020].

[30] Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). On page 96, Ruggiero notes that punishments for rape in this period varied due to the 'age and status' of the woman. Rapes that 'crossed social boundaries upward', the example which would best fit Caliban's attempted crime against Miranda, warranted 'penalties of unique severity and the full richness of [Venetian law].' Ruggiero details, on page 92, the case of a daughter of a minor noble being raped by a clothier, whose punishment was to be paraded around Venice, have his hands cut off, and to be hanged from a chain for three days.

[31] James E. Phillips, 'Renaissance Concepts of Justice and the Structure of *The Fairie Queene*, Book V', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 33: 2 (1970), 103-120 (p. 111).

Though Caliban is wishing discomfort on Prospero, he has no power, hierarchically or magically, to make it happen. On the other hand, when Prospero responds, the audience and the other characters are aware that this is something he is capable of following through, as he possesses great power and rules over the island. Following a brief back-and-forth between the two opposing parties, Prospero reminds Caliban of his duties, and the punishments that may follow if he delays any longer:

> Fetch us in fuel; and be quick, thou'rt best,
> To answer other business. Shrug'st thou, malice?
> If thou neglect'st, or dost unwillingly
> What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps,
> Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar,
> That beasts shall tremble at thy din. (I. 2. 366-71)

He makes clear that these punishments are not simply to inconvenience Caliban, but to deliver bursts of targeted agony, strong enough to stop Caliban's breathing and make him howl uncontrollably. If he curses the magician and his daughter, there will be definite punishment, and if he as much as does his chores 'unwillingly', then there is the promise of even further retribution – a double punishment of physical violence, at the cost of mere, unactionable words from Caliban.

Moreover, within both of these examples is a common theme: punishments being exacted during the night. Prospero ensures that his 'monster' cannot get to sleep – a very unusual punishment for the one character whose haste and timeliness he is trying to nurture. Curiously, the night is also a time about which Caliban expresses his most poetic musings, telling Stephano and Trinculo that 'in dreaming,/The clouds methought would open, and show riches/Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked/I cried to dream again' (III. 2. 132-5). Exacting punishment during this time of rest matches the unusually specific punishments of Malvolio and Shylock, who are both made to suffer from injuries that seem designed to counter the things that they enjoy, or the traits that have offended the opposing parties. For Caliban, this unusual punishment targets the only solace he has on the island, when he is asleep and can dream, as his waking moments are spent cursing Prospero, or being cursed by him.

The net result of torturing Caliban in this way – through physical pain and sleep deprivation – is not a character who is obedient and well-behaved, but one who clearly regrets ever getting involved with Prospero and Miranda, and who is willing to plot against their lives to exact his own revenge. The constant stream of cramps and agony may have initially come from a place of parental responsibility in trying circumstances, but, as Prospero has demonstrated, it now occurs whenever Caliban even thinks about being defiant. These actions are clearly more than just punishments, as the very threat of them is what Prospero hopes will allow him to continue physically to dominate Caliban, and to ensure that he continues to serve him through fear. It is unclear whether the magician can really read Caliban's thoughts and know when he is working 'unwillingly', but the threat alone is enough to terrify his 'monster'. The initial few lines spoken by Caliban when he meets Stephano and Trinculo for the first time are particularly potent examples of just how terrified Prospero's punishments have made him:

> Do not torment me! O! […]
> The spirit torments me! O! […]
> Do not torment me, prithee! I'll bring my wood home faster.
> […]
> Thou dost me yet but little hurt; thou wilt anon, I know it by
> thy trembling. Now Prosper works upon thee. (II. 2. 51-71)

Caliban's piteous behaviour during this encounter is indicative of just how severe the psychological trauma has become, to the point that any new encounter must be a spirit sent by Prospero to hurt him further, and whom he can only satisfy by promising to work harder. Even when Stephano and Trinculo behave amicably towards him, Caliban's first response is that this must be a trick, and that the 'hurt' is still going to happen 'anon'. What began as Prospero's attempt at judicial balance has become the prolonged torment of a character who both cannot defend himself against such might, and who entered the relationship in good faith. Prospero has moved from trying to correct a judicial imbalance, to exacting revenge. What we are left with is a character who can inspire sympathy *despite* his past crimes, one who has been completely dominated and enslaved, thus becoming 'adhesiveness' incarnate. Indeed, Caliban appears as the answer to the question of what would have happened to Malvolio if he had been left in the dark room forever. Though both

characters feel 'cheated' (III. 2. 38),[32] the only higher authority, like Olivia to Malvolio, who can release Caliban from his torment is Prospero, the person who put him there in the first place.

The play's conclusion, when all the characters of the play gather together to receive their share of the 'moment', poses some interesting questions, then, when compared with the endings of *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*. Does Caliban's 'grace' represent the type of closure that is missing from those two plays? Is a genuine apology what we want all along from Malvolio and Shylock? If so, why does Caliban, who does appear to seek 'grace' and forgiveness, still operate as an 'adhesive' character? The answers to these questions may lie with the nature of the plays' endings themselves, and with our own expectations of what should happen in a Shakespearean comedy. In *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*, 'adhesiveness' is created by two actions: a 'surplus' of punishment towards one character, followed by the lack of a satisfactory resolution for that character. In these plays, the attempted conclusion is not much of an attempt at all, as both Malvolio and Shylock are 'disappeared' so that the other characters can get on with the business of finishing the play. Their presence is an inconvenience for a harmonious ending. The result, as discussed in the previous chapters, is something tonally imbalanced, 'a little out of tune'.[33] In *The Tempest*, one of these wrongs is seemingly righted – Caliban gets his share of the happy ending, returning through wisdom to the group, and seemingly embracing the possibility of his redemption.

However, despite having his own ending of sorts, the key to Caliban's 'adhesiveness' comes from the same source as *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice* – from unresolved questions, including, crucially, the question of justice. Caliban is indeed present for the finale, but what is creating unease in this instance is the same lack of resolution that dogged Malvolio and Shylock following their absence. The physical presence of Caliban at the play's conclusion is not enough to prove that all has been balanced, and he demonstrates that an ending is not necessarily the same as a resolution. When Caliban seeks for 'grace' (V. 1. 293), is this his resolution, or Prospero's? As with Shylock, can Caliban's conversion be taken as

[32] William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night; or, What You Will*, ed. by Elizabeth Story Donno (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). All further references to *Twelfth Night* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses. Malvolio believes he has been 'gulled', as in V. 1. 322: 'And made the most notorious geck and gull'.
[33] Logan Pearsall Smith, *On Reading Shakespeare* (London: Constable & Co, 1933), p. 96.

sincere when it seems that he has no other choice, or is it merely performative? Caliban's subservience benefits Prospero in as much it proves that his teachings eventually worked, but this does not seem like the ending that he would have chosen for himself. The Caliban of this ending is a characterisation unfamiliar to us, a 'grac'd'[34] version of the character we had been given thus far, whose appearance is enough for critics like Jonson to sense a sort of improbability or incorrectness: a lack of consistency and 'decorum' when it comes to what we have known of his character up to this point. Just as with Malvolio and Shylock, the Caliban of old has been 'disappeared', though, in this case, Shakespeare provides a replacement in an attempt at filling the void otherwise created. The fact that a 'surplus' still exists at the close of the play is evidence that this replacement monster is unsatisfactory in providing an adequate resolution to the character's demands.

In the same way that Prospero offers potential mercy to Caliban if he agrees to get back to work – 'As you look/To have my pardon' (V. 1. 290-291) – the 'forgiveness' offered to Antonio and Sebastian also has caveats. They must cooperate in restoring Prospero as the Duke of Milan, and, in return, he will 'tell no tales' (V. 1. 128) of their traitorous activities, which now include plotting to kill Alonso. Sebastian seems amazed at Prospero's knowledge, 'The devil speaks in him!' (V. 1. 128), but Antonio wisely keeps quiet, amazed that he should be forgiven by the very man he usurped, or silently frustrated that he has lost his dukedom. In this sense, Prospero has no intention of forgiving Antonio and Sebastian, instead choosing to make a deal that benefits both sides. Following the transaction of knowledge that he made with Caliban, Prospero has once more arranged a deal heavily weighted in his favour, and one that could allow the magician to blackmail the pair long into the future. This dealing seems to undercut what we believe will be an 'inclusive ending',[35] as both inclusivity and finality are tainted by Prospero's caveats.

For all of the characters to whom Prospero offers his forgiveness, there is no sense of him having outwitted or defeated them. Both Malvolio and Shylock are eventually overwhelmed by the 'surplus' numbers and 'excess' power of their enemies, but, in the case of *The Tempest*, Prospero's adversaries hardly put up a fight, nor can they. From the very beginning, when he commands Ariel to shipwreck the Italians on their return from Tunis,

[34] Ben Jonson, *The Works of Ben Jonson*, p. 6.
[35] Lindley, 'Introduction', p. 95.

Prospero demonstrates that there is no contest to be had here – the game has already been won. This is furthered by a lack of execution shown by Caliban, Trinculo, and Stephano, who conjure up a plan to usurp and kill Prospero, but never come close to carrying it out. In an aside, Prospero even reveals that Caliban's plot, as insignificant to the magician as it is, has completely slipped his mind:

> [*Aside*] I had forgot that foul conspiracy
> Of the beast Caliban and his confederates
> Against my life. The minute of their plot
> Is almost come. [*To the spirits*] Well done! Avoid! No more. (IV. 1. 139-42)

If Shylock's struggle against the biased Venetian judicial system is seen as a tragedy inspiring 'adhesiveness', then Caliban's complete impotence against Prospero must be an 'adhesive' born of his piteousness.

The nature of each of Prospero's final interactions with these rebellious characters demonstrates that he has not won a hard-fought victory, instead he has quietly dealt with their discontent. This triumph lies not in the defeat or vanquishing of these characters as it does with Malvolio and Shylock, but in their suppression. As such, Prospero can choose their endings, and makes each one a deal that will benefit him in the future. Antonio and Sebastian are blackmailed into cooperating, with Prospero's silence exchanged for their unconditional loyalty, and Caliban finally embraces his transformation into the perfect, obedient servant – or so it may seem, at least – one whose service may have to continue in Italy, beyond the island he considers home. Shakespeare has provided resolution at the close of *The Tempest*, and has even brought all of the characters on stage for the finale, but this remains only Prospero's resolution. His title is restored, his daughter marries into the House of Naples, and he not only quashes the plans of his enemies but secures their obedience to him in deals that he could, theoretically, renege on at any time, if they ever needed reminding of their place or what they owe him. For Prospero, perhaps *The Tempest* is a play about endings after all, likely leaving the island believing that, among other things, his project to educate and 'Christianise' Caliban was, in the end, a success. For the audience and the play, we are left not with a conclusion of poetic justice, but of 'poetic faith',[36] both in the

[36] Thomas Kullmann, 'Poetic Justice in Shakespeare's *King Lear* and *The Tempest*', *Connotations*, 25: 2 (2015), 209-224 (p. 220).

Christian sense of mercy and forgiveness, and the 'good faith' that the audience is asked to give to Prospero's version of a happy ending. Further demonstrating Caliban's limitless 'adhesiveness' with the audience, this seems to be his understanding of the play's final scenes too – he must once again trust what Prospero is offering him, and hope that this final transaction does not turn as foul as the previous one. Caliban puts his faith, it seems, in 'grace', and hopes that forgiveness and reform may be more constant than the whims of 'educated' men.

Who is Caliban?

It is worth noting that, as the master orchestrator of what occurs on the island, this was Prospero's plan all along – to achieve his own resolution. So indebted are the events of the play to those events that came before that, for Prospero, *The Tempest* becomes a triumphant tale of how he returns to Milan and confronts those who cast him out. For the magician, the island is not a home, it is a means to an end, somewhere where he can learn what he must about his usurpation, then return to Milan. French philosopher Gilles Deleuze acknowledges this role of the deserted island, even making specific reference to those who are shipwrecked:

> An island doesn't stop being deserted simply because it is inhabited. While it is true that the movement of humans toward and on the island takes up the movement of the island prior to humankind, *some* people can occupy the island – it is still deserted, all the more so, provided they are sufficiently, that is, absolutely separate, and provided they are sufficient, absolute creators. Certainly, this is never the case in fact, though people who are shipwrecked approach such a condition.[37]

In this sense, the island is only deserted by perspective – Prospero's European perspective. The presence of indigenous beings does not make the island any less deserted for the magician and his daughter, because, as Rachel Bryant remarks, it remains isolated by its 'utter independence from the non-indigenous cultural world that has forgotten it'.[38]

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[37] Gilles Deleuze, *Deserted Islands and Other Texts 1953-1974*, trans. by Sylvère Lotringer and others (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), p. 10.
[38] Rachel Bryant, 'Toward the Desertion of Sycorax's Island: Challenging the Colonial Contract', *English Studies in Canada*, 39: 4 (2013), 91-111, (p. 105).

Furthermore, because Prospero never elects to adopt the island's traditions, instead attempting to impose his own culture, he never adapts, and the island remains deserted to his limited perspective. For Caliban, however, the island is his home, and his deep understanding of the local flora and fauna shows that, despite being the product of another exile, he has chosen to adopt the island; for him, it is no longer deserted, because it is all he has ever known. Unlike Prospero and even Sycorax, Caliban was born on this island, and considers himself a native, an integral part of what constitutes the land he lives off. This is another example of the crucial ideological differences between Prospero and Caliban, and how the former's unwillingness to understand the world of the latter results in the breakdown of their knowledge exchange. Prospero takes just enough of Caliban's knowledge to survive the island, but never applies it in a way that would encourage him to inhabit the island. Paired with Prospero's continuous punishment of Caliban, it is the latter's connection to the island – his home – that generates ongoing injustice, which drives his 'adhesiveness'.

The play leaves us with two basic interpretations of what happens to Caliban, though both are fraught with tragic potential: he either stays on the island, or he leaves with Prospero. The stage direction at the end of Act V, 'Exeunt all', suggests that Caliban leaves with Prospero and travels with him to Milan. However, forgiven or not, this is a future that is unsustainable for a character who, throughout the play, has vehemently disagreed with the European way of life. Furthermore, at different times during the play, Caliban has had his monetary value as a 'holiday-fool' (II. 2. 27) assessed, first by Trinculo, 'There would this monster make a man […] When [the English] will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian' (II. 2. 27-30), followed by Antonio at the play's close, 'One of them/Is a plain fish, and no doubt marketable' (V. 1. 264-5). Caliban's usefulness to Prospero is measured only by the manual labour he can provide, and, though it seems that they would both be willing to continue this exchange in Milan, it appears feasible to suggest that the reinstated Duke of Milan would have no shortage of servants (who will not have attempted to rape his daughter) willing to perform the same tasks. If Caliban cannot continue his work in service of Prospero, his commodification at the hands of Europeans might continue in the form of being presented to Italy as an unusual spectacle

– a fate, if not strictly worse than being tortured by magic on a daily basis, at least comparably terrible.

There is, of course, an outside chance that Caliban remains on the island. The audience is given direct evidence that Prospero does not take Ariel with him, 'Then to the elements/Be free, and fare thou well' (V. 1. 315-6), and so it is possible that the same eventuality is granted to Caliban – 'pardon' may equal freedom. Although repossessing the island is exactly the situation Caliban has wanted from the beginning of the play, there are now new variables with which he must contend. Caliban may have to share the island with the newly free Ariel, who, as Prospero reminds us in Act I, was imprisoned within a tree by Caliban's mother, Sycorax – 'Refusing her grand hests, she did confine thee,/By help of her more potent ministers,/And in her most unmitigable rage,/Into a cloven pine' (I. 2. 274-7). Ariel, who has no shortage of magical powers of his (or her) own, would no doubt have the upper hand over Caliban, and could choose to control both him and the island. As W. H. Auden's 'audience' remarks in chapter three of *The Sea and the Mirror*, a conversation between an imagined theatre audience and the actor playing Caliban (or, perhaps, Caliban himself), 'Is it possible that, not content with inveigling Caliban into Ariel's kingdom, you have also let loose Ariel in Caliban's?'[39]

Though the complex ending may explain why Caliban behaves as he does, ie. how his 'adhesive' is created, and where he can go from there, it does not explain how this 'adhesive' manages to stick to so many people of different cultural identities. Caliban's presentation of different faces has proven his strength in this sense. As with Shylock, it seems almost impossible to think of writing about the play without somehow factoring in Caliban. He speaks a similar number of lines (170) as any of the other major characters in the play (Ariel speaks 174, Miranda speaks 154, etc.), yet his influence on critical thought surrounding *The Tempest* is matched only by its principal character, Prospero, who wields almost four times as many lines (676). For the critic, the play has seemingly become less a comedy of an exiled magician and his daughter returning home to Milan, and more a study of European interactions with Others, written at a time when western thoughts were fascinated by expeditions to Africa and the New World.

[39] W. H. Auden, *The Sea and the Mirror*, ed. by Arthur Kirsch (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 35.

Viewing the play through a post-colonial lens has remained the focus to this day, with Caliban's experience of imperialism and enslavement being shared by those of any nationality whose ancestors may have encountered European colonisation and oppression. John Beverley's essay 'Caliban After Communism: Thoughts on the Future of Cuba' evokes the 'rich history of the Caliban-cannibal-Caribbean-Latin American association' to wonder which direction Cuba might take in a post-Communist future. Beverley references two influential Latin American essays in his work – *Ariel*, by José Enrique Rodó, and Roberto Fernandéz Retamar's *Calibán* – both of which see their titular Shakespearean characters respectively as the appropriate metaphor for Latin America. Written at the close of the nineteenth century, Rodó's essay sees adopting Ariel's characteristics, being the 'spirit of the air', as the only way to resist the 'emerging forces of U.S. imperialism'. Countering this, Retamar sees Caliban as embodying the 'spirit of national liberation and postcolonial critique', and Ariel as representative of the intellectuals 'bound fatally to the ruling hierarchy and foreign domination', who criticise Cuba from their position as CIA funded 'lackeys of U.S. imperialism'.[40] The subtext of this disagreement is one that has always shadowed discussions about Caliban – the naturally gifted intellectual versus the more traditional, taught mind.

Many of the political and cultural adoptions of Caliban, as in Rodó's and Retamar's cases, come from Caliban's own uncertain identity. The character's name, for example, has long been presumed to be a reference to cannibalism, the Caribbean, or both. This presumption supported the theory that Caliban's origins were thoroughly indebted to Anglo-American relations. Perhaps he was a depiction of an indigenous Amerindian, inspired by a number of accounts that Shakespeare may have read, including, as David Lindley lists them, 'Sylvester Jourdain's *Discovery of the Bermudas* (1610), the Council of Virginia's *True Declaration of the State of the Colonie in Virginia* (1610), and a letter by William Strachey, known by the title of *True Reportory of the Wrack*.'[41] Furthermore, it is not impossible to think that Shakespeare may have personally seen a kidnapped New World native on display in England (as Trinculo reminds us when he first sees Caliban, '[the English] will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead

[40] John Beverley, 'Caliban After Communism: Thoughts on the Future of Cuba', *Cultural Critique*, 98 (2018), 267-277 (p. 271-2).
[41] Lindley, 'Introduction', p. 9.

Indian' (II. 2. 29-30)) and taken this as inspiration for the character. Shakespeare even provides us with a specific geographical reference, when Ariel speaks of the 'still-vexed Bermudas' (I. 2. 229), an island written about in some of the accounts that he may have read.

However, '*The Tempest* still sits uneasily within such a decisive, retrospective 'colonial' frame',[42] and there are a number of problems when we try to conclude that Caliban finds his literary origins in wholly Anglo-American sources. First, and perhaps most obvious, is that Caliban is not a cannibal. Morton Luce wrote in his introduction to an early twentieth-century edition of the play that cannibal/Caliban is intended only to denote a type of character, that of the typical 'island savage', and that 'we must not expect him devouring human flesh on the stage'.[43] Though this is not beyond the realms of possibility, it seems hard to imagine Shakespeare making such a specific reference without following through with its implications. This absence is even more notable if, as we are led to believe, one of Shakespeare's sources for *The Tempest* was John Florio's translation of Michel de Montaigne's essay on the morality of cannibals, which would highlight not just his knowledge of cannibalism, but of that practice taking place in the New World,[44] a theory which critics believe we can 'reasonably suspect'.[45] As Horace Howard Furness commented in his own notes to the play, written in the late nineteenth century, 'the appearance of the monster without a trace of his bloodthirsty characteristic must have been disappointing.'[46]

Ariel mentioning Bermuda is certainly more concrete, though it must be noted that this is just one of many specific geographical references in the play, which include parts of modern-day Italy, northern Africa, and Stephano's more fluid 'men of Ind' (II. 2. 52), a likely allusion to West Indian natives. Acknowledging Shakespeare's probable knowledge of the New World, through the aforementioned historical accounts, also involves acknowledging

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[42] John Wylie, 'New and Old Worlds: *The Tempest* and Early Colonial Discourse', *Social & Cultural Geography*, 1: 1 (2000), 45-63 (p. 48).

[43] Morton Luce, 'Introduction', in *The Works of Shakespeare: The Tempest*, ed. by Morton Luce (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1919), p. xxxviii. Archive.org ebook.

[44] Michel de Montaigne, *The Essayes; or Morall, Politike and Millitarie Discourses of Lo: Michaell de Montaigne*, trans. by John Florio (London: Val. Sims, 1603), *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: < https://search-proquest-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/docview/2240953828?accountid=12117> [accessed 13th July 2010].

[45] Kenji Go, 'Montaigne's 'Cannibals' and *The Tempest* Revisited', *Studies in Philology*, 109: 4 (2012), 455-473, (pp. 472-3). 'On account of all these verbal and conceptual parallels and analogues between *The Tempest* and "Caniballes", we can reasonably suspect that Shakespeare, in reading this chapter of Montaigne-Florio's *Essayes*, conceived not merely the utopian vision of Gonzalo's "Commonwealth" but also the peculiar visions of Sycorax and her island. […] It appears that Montaigne-Florio's essay "Caniballes" ought to be reconsidered as a far more important literary source of *The Tempest* than heretofore acknowledged.'

[46] Horace Howard Furness, 'footnote '10 Caliban'', in *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: The Tempest*, ed. by Horace Howard Furness, 17 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1892), IX, p. 5. Archive.org ebook.

that Bermuda was uninhabited at the time explorers first visited, weakening any claim that Caliban is solely sourced from a particular New World tribe of the Bermuda area.

There are other, less vaunted, potential origins for the character's name. The town of Calibia (Kelibia), being situated in modern-day Tunisia, would pair quite nicely with the fact that Antonio and his group were on a return journey from Tunis when they were shipwrecked. If pushed, Calibia could also link Caliban and his mother Sycorax, who hailed from Algiers, to the island, and how they may have become exiled on the same island years before *The Tempest* takes place.[47] It would make a great deal of sense that Caliban, a character whose immediate familial history begins in North Africa, would be given a name inspired by a coastal African town. As has been noted by Vaughan and Vaughan, Calibia was not only present on maps 'since 1529', but also appeared in Richard Knolles' 1603 book *The Generall Historie of the Turkes*, which 'Shakespeare mined for *Othello*'.[48]

Other possibilities include the Romani word 'cauliban/kauliban', meaning 'black' or something of 'blackness'. Shakespeare was no doubt aware of travellers in England, as they were considered a menace worse than the English vagabond, and as 'threats to the social order'. As such, they became 'targets of special discrimination'.[49] There were frequent references to 'gypsies' in literature of the time, often in the same breath as other marginalised groups. Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, though it only features a passing remark, sets the standard for grouping gypsies with other disregarded members of society, 'Bastards,/Some dozen or more that he begot on beggars,/Gyspies, and Jews, and blackmoors, when he was/drunk.' (I. 5. 43-5).[50] Just as James Shapiro's *Shakespeare and the Jews* highlighted the early modern concern about 'how easily the Christian desire to convert the Jews could be exploited by a Jew cunning enough',[51] John Hoyland's early nineteenth-century study on the travelling community showed that England was concerned with the

[47] Kristian Smidt, 'Shakespeare's Absent Characters', *English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature*, 61 (1980), 397-407. Sycorax's non-appearance in the play is one of many 'tantalising' absences in Shakespeare: she is one of those characters whom Kristian Smidt describes as '[having] no speaking parts and do not otherwise manifest their presence […] 'ghost characters''. In *The Tempest* alone, as well as Sycorax, we have Antonio's presumably drowned son ('[…] the Duke of Milan/And his brave son being twain' (I. 2. 436-7)), and Alonso's daughter Claribel, whose marriage to the King of Tunis is not only the reason for the Italians being at sea during the opening scene of Act One, but yet another event anchoring the play in the Old World.

[48] Alden T. Vaughan & Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban: A Cultural History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 32-3.

[49] Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban*, p. 35.

[50] Ben Jonson, *Volpone*, ed. by Brian Parker and others (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 75.

[51] James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), p. 162.

'arts and deception'[52] they were said to bring with them, and the use of 'quaint trickes and devices, not known here at that time among us', which, it was felt, often resulted in the cozening of 'poore country girles'.[53]

At this point, it is to be noted that these two possible alternatives are entirely that – possibilities. Both carry evidence to suggest that, at some point, Shakespeare may have had the material available to him to come across these words, and, if only subconsciously, to absorb them for later use. The same can be said about any accounts of the New World, and so it must be stressed that all that is available when it comes to deciphering Caliban's origins is evidence of current topics at the time *The Tempest* was written. Though the cannibal/Caribbean candidate has become the most widely acknowledged, it is only as likely, or unlikely, a source as Calibia or 'cauliban/kauliban'. Acknowledging the 'New World 'features' in the play' must also involve an effort to include its 'more precise political and historical context'.[54] From this point, it seems that the harder one looks at a particular source for Caliban, the more another source will resist and pull back to the centre, a vague mix whose potential encompasses all possibilities. D. H. Lawrence, in the first chapter of his early twentieth-century *Studies in Classic American Literature*, notes a similar magnetic pull away from Europe emerging during the Renaissance period, when the 'old circle of vital flow' was broken, and Europe fell into 'polar unison with America'. Leslie Fiedler adds to this idea by reorienting America's 'great magnetic wind' as 'from Africa or, at least, via Africa'.[55] Caliban becomes the perfect representation of the old world meeting the new, the culmination of a Euro-African flow being intercepted by, and mixed with, a newly established Euro-American flow.

Marina Warner's *Indigo*, though not a direct narrative sequel to *The Tempest* (the novel simply attempts to 'write back' to Shakespeare), sees the action move across the Atlantic multiple times, as well as between time periods, with the two strands of the novel taking place in the 1600s and the 1900s. Though Warner's Sycorax, an indigo dye maker for her island tribe, is clearly from the West Indies, she comes to adopt Caliban (Dulé, as he is known to her) after saving him from the womb of his deceased mother, who had washed up

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[52] John Hoyland, *A Historical Survey of the Customs, Habits, & Present State of The Gypsies* (York: WM. Alexander, 1816), p. 80.
[53] Samuel Rid, *The Art of Jugling or Legerdemaine* (London: Edward Allde, 1612), fols 1r-2v, *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://search-proquest-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/docview/2248531965?accountid=12117> [accessed 14th July 2020].
[54] Wylie, '*The Tempest* and Early Colonial Discourse', p. 53.
[55] Fiedler, *The Stranger in Shakespeare*, p. 204.

on the shore. He becomes 'the first African to arrive on the islands',[56] his mother having been thrown from one of the slave ships that navigated the new Euro-American flow of the transatlantic slave trade. In contrast, Ariel, also adopted by Sycorax, is presented as a daughter of Arawak heritage, 'russet in complexion, like the shell of a pecan'.[57] Though Sycorax is loving, Caliban and Ariel feel somewhat alienated on the island, recognising that they are different from the other inhabitants, but unable to return to 'where they had come from, where they had lived, before'.[58] Their common experience as diaspora initially binds them in understanding, though they soon realise that they are all one and the same in the eyes of the 'tallow men',[59] the white European settlers. Warner's choice to give each member of Sycorax's adopted family different heritage not only makes sense in the wider context of the time period, and colonialisation, but works with the idea that Shakespeare's originals of these characters can appeal to a broad audience. The combination of West Indian-African-Amerindian is potent and appropriate, but one of many combinations that could apply to these characters.

Opening up the likely sources for Caliban is not an attempt to disparage those who have adopted his experience for their own purposes. On the contrary, by highlighting the plethora of plausible origins from both sides of the Atlantic, the 'adhesive' quality of the character is shown to be widespread through its comparable vagueness, and his ability to appeal to different experiences of colonisations and methods of decolonisation. Though the suggestion that 'Shakespeare would have viewed all subaltern people the same way or as entirely interchangeable' is, as Ridge noted, thoroughly 'unreasonable',[60] by highlighting these different claims to Caliban's origins, the hope is that a reader may see that Caliban is not just all of these possibilities, but potentially none of them, simultaneously. This is particularly evident in Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête*. As in the works of Rodó and Retamar, Césaire's Caliban can be further determined by how we define Ariel – in this instance, Ariel is 'a mulatto slave',[61] who, despite preferring obedient servitude to Caliban's more rebellious methods, understands that their fates are intertwined: 'Each of us hears his own drum. You

[56] Marina Warner, *Indigo* (London: Vintage Books, 1993), p. 85.
[57] Warner, *Indigo*, p. 112.
[58] Warner, *Indigo*, p. 115.
[59] Warner, *Indigo*, p. 99.
[60] Ridge, 'Ownership of the Island in *The Tempest*', p. 232.
[61] Césaire, *Une Tempête*, p. 9.

march to the beat of yours. I march to the beat of mine. I wish you courage, brother.'[62] In this sense, Caliban is the perfect composite Other, his experience potentially applying to any marginalised or oppressed group. What allows Rodó and Retamar to use Caliban as the inspiration for their opposing works is the universal 'adhesive' that his experience, up to the play's conclusion, inspires – they may sympathise with his situation and experience just as readily as, for example, Césaire, and his political and aesthetic 'négritude' movement.[63]

In addition to the multiplicity of his origins, Caliban's behaviour as a transgressive individual also allows his 'adhesive' qualities to apply to many different oppressed groups. He openly curses Prospero for trying to educate him, 'The red plague rid you/For learning me your language!' (I. 2. 364-5), announces his claim to the island, 'This island's mine by Sycorax my mother,/Which thou tak'st from me' (I. 2. 332-3), and plots to have his master killed, '[…] with a log/Batter his skull, or paunch him with a stake,/Or cut his wezand with thy knife' (III. 2. 81-3). As a result, Caliban not only operates as a representative for those who have encountered oppression, most obviously in the context of colonialism and slavery, but also as a symbol of rebellion – someone who fights for liberty and re-possession of land – and his knowledge of his matrilineal claim to the island serves as a potent example of a counter to the imperialist attitudes that usually preceded such oppression. Though the character is open to appeal to many different groups, he also actively resists being associated with any who could be construed as the oppressor, and curses their attempts at joining him, or him to them. For such interpretations, Caliban can be adopted as a 'symbolic, not historic' figure, chosen because of 'what he represents to the observer, not for what Shakespeare may have had in mind'.[64] It is important to note, however, that this view of Caliban as rebellious omits, or attempts to answer, the ending when he seeks 'grace' and forgiveness (Césaire did the latter by leaving Caliban and Prospero in perpetual animosity). For post-colonial critics, this erasure is a necessary measure if they wish to see Caliban as an undying expression of rebellion, and not simply as a martyr.

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[62] Césaire, *Une Tempête*, p. 28.
[63] Caliban, or what he represents, has resonated with authors from across the globe. Some of these include Ghanaian poet Raphael Armattoe ('Beauty Ended'), Ugandan poet Taban lo Liyong ('Call to Arms'), Sierra Leonean poet Lemuel Johnson ('Calypso for Caliban'), Haitian poet Anthony Phelps ('Mots Croisés'), and Indian poet Suniti Namjoshi (*Snapshots of Caliban* & *Sycorax: New Fables and Poems*).
[64] Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban*, p. 146.

In Philip Edwards's twentieth-century study of English and Irish drama, *Threshold of a Nation*, he remarks that the 'vagueness about what Caliban actually is, is important. He is not an Indian, but a mysteriously begotten scion of the old world […]. He is one of us, the thing of darkness we acknowledge ours: our heart of darkness.'[65] Though the character's openness to multiple interpretations – 'one of us' as much as 'Other' – was not recognised immediately, the question of the ambiguity of his origins was duly noted by critics. Joseph Addison, writing in *The Spectator* in the early eighteenth century, praised the construction of Caliban as one of pure invention, in comparison to characters such as Hotspur or Julius Caesar, remarking that the former 'was to be supplied out of [Shakespeare's] own Imagination, whereas the other might have been formed upon Tradition, History and Observation'.[66] John Holt's mid-eighteenth-century essay *Remarks on The Tempest* likewise admires how Caliban's actions are 'work'd up to a Height answerable to the Greatness of the Imagination that form'd it, and will always secure *Shakespeare*'s Claim to Poetic Fame'.[67] These critics clearly believed that an enormous strength of imagination was needed on Shakespeare's part to create a character such as Caliban, at once praising the author's inventiveness and the character's inventedness. Writing in the late eighteenth century, Ludwig Tieck comments that Caliban is the perfect example of the larger whole of *The Tempest*, the strange 'mixture of ridiculousness and abomination' perfectly encapsulating the play's 'completely foreign, until now unknown world'.[68] Where some equate 'vague' with 'muddy', these critics clearly see the potential of such an open character.

The list of receptors for Caliban's particular brand of 'adhesiveness' – that is, his openness to interpretation – seems limitless when, as so often is the case, the character is interpreted symbolically. Victor Hugo, though he is describing a number of other Shakespearean comedies alongside *The Tempest*, recognised the play's infinite potential in the mid-nineteenth century:

> It's fantasy, it's arabesque. The arabesque in art is the same phenomenon as vegetation in nature. The arabesque grows,

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[65] Philip Edwards, *Threshold of a Nation: A study in English and Irish drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 108.
[66] James Addison, 'CCLXXIX', in *The Spectator*, 19 January 1712. ProQuest ebook.
[67] John Holt, *Remarks on The Tempest: Or an attempt To Rescue Shakespear from the Many Errors falsely charged on him, by his several Editors* (London: [n. pub.], 1750), p. 16. ECCO ebook.
[68] Ludwig Tieck, 'Ueber Shakspeare's Behandlung des Wunderbaren', in *Der Sturm. Ein Schauspiel von Shakspear, für das Theater bearbeitet* (Berlin: Carl August Nicolai, 1796). Project Gutenberg Canada ebook. My translation.

> increases, knots, exfoliates, multiplies, turns green, blossoms, branches into every dream. The arabesque is immeasurable; it has an unprecedented power of extension and enlargement; it fills horizons and opens others; it intercepts the luminous depths by innumerable intersections, and if you mix the human figure with these branches, the whole is dizzying; it is breathtaking.[69]

Though Hugo is describing a wider genre of work, his sentiments on the arabesque could easily be applied directly to Caliban, whose openness of identity expands naturally to an exponential amount of criticism, adaptation, and interpretation, with each branch creating new avenues of debate. So much potentiality would be unusual in most circumstances, but none more so than in *The Tempest*, a play which has been so often linked with the concepts of closure and finality. As David Lindley notes in his introduction to the play, 'the persistence of the perception that *The Tempest* was the grand finale to [Shakespeare's] writing life all too easily obscures the fact that in many respects this is as experimental a play as he ever wrote'.[70] The conflation of Shakespeare and Prospero has been fuelled, of course, by the play's epilogue, 'Now my charms are all o'erthrown' (Epilogue. 1), and the idea of a magician relinquishing the books that give him his power. Though this tempting comparison ignores the fact that Shakespeare likely worked on *Cardenio*, *Henry VIII*, and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* after *The Tempest*, it has not stopped the play being associated with endings: those of Shakespeare's literary career, and his life. Caliban's own ending, that of the rebel submitting to his oppressor, supports this reading, but only if you believe that his conversion to 'grace' is genuine.

Subjugation

When one considers all of these points as a whole – Caliban's mixed cultural history, the events that take place before the play begins, the nature of the 'surplus' opposition that he faces – and bring them into focus alongside Caliban's uneasy and complex final scenes, it is easy to see how he operates as a remarkably different 'adhesive' character by comparison to Malvolio and Shylock. His is an evolution of the term 'adhesive', not created by an event or two towards the end of the play, but mostly from events to which we can never be truly

[69] Victor Hugo, *William Shakespeare* (Paris: Librairie Internationale, 1864), pp. 264-5. Google ebook. My translation.
[70] Lindley, 'Introduction', p. 3.

privy, and from an uncertainty about what Caliban receiving Prospero's 'pardon' might mean for the future. Caliban's 'adhesiveness' is a form boiled down to its purest and most universal state, and thus, from the moment that he appears on stage and his backstory is established, this 'adhesive' is already being applied to a receptive audience. The equivalent event to Malvolio's torment or Shylock's trial is, in this case, a whole series of events, starting from the moment Prospero set foot on the island. His re-education, his punishments following the attempted rape of Miranda, the loss of what he considers to be his island, having to serve a master whose power is almost beyond comprehension (Prospero has enough power to 'make a vassal' (I. 2. 374) of his mother's god, Setebos) – these are all moments of 'surplus' that could inspire 'adhesiveness' on their own, and they are all moments in Caliban's life that begin before the play opens, with most continuing throughout. This pre-existing effect is then added to in the same 'standard' way that occurs in *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*, through Caliban's inherent humanity and expressive poetry. Arguably, the 'monster' is an answer to the question posed at the close of both *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*: what happened to these characters after their respective 'adhesive' events? From high energy moments that inspire anger in Malvolio and triumphalism against Shylock, what comes after is what we have in Caliban – pity. Even if it is accepted that Caliban has embraced 'grace', this is a 'happy ending' fraught with tragic potential, secured through enslavement and domination – he has submitted. Any outrage we may feel about Caliban's circumstances is directed towards events that occur before the play begins, and what remains during is simply an extension of those events, an 'excess'. Caliban's threshold of punishment has been reached from the beginning, his scales imbalanced, and so, from that moment, the audience may find itself already thinking 'the poor man is wronged',[71] or that 'He hath been most notoriously abused' (V. 1. 356). In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare presents his exploration of 'adhesiveness' after its initial application.

Shakespeare need not have provided such a rich backstory for the relationship between Prospero and Caliban, and instead given us the same dynamic that exists during the play without the exposition of what came before. By drawing specific attention to what came before, the audience is invited to consider those events during the play. Caliban's

[71] Heinrich Heine, 'Shakespeares Mädchen und Frauen' (1838), in *The Romantics on Shakespeare*, ed. by Jonathan Bate (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 465-467 (p. 465).

interactions with Stephano and Trinculo, essentially acting as a restaging of the moments when Prospero and Miranda arrived on the island, remind us that those past events are always a factor when considering the present, and indicate why having knowledge of that backstory is important for the play moving forward. Furthermore, this information is vital for understanding how Caliban's 'adhesive' operates during the events of *The Tempest*, and how that 'adhesiveness' has managed to stick to people from cultures that have only been vaguely linked to the monster's origins. Malvolio, Shylock, and Caliban appeal to a large audience through a shared sense of humanity, but, where the former two characters further appeal to a specific oppressed minority (through religion, though Malvolio's link to Puritanism is vague), Caliban is able to do the same to the very concept of the oppressed – whether this be a minority, or, indeed, a majority.[72] Arguably, Caliban's secondary 'adhesive', that which is supposed to appeal strongly to a specific group, reaches an audience almost as inclusive as the primary 'adhesive', that which appeals to humanity.

Ironically, the centuries old view of Caliban as an unrefined savage is contested not just by his shared humanity with those of a typical Western upbringing, but by his secondary 'adhesive' being so unrefined. It is through Caliban's kaleidoscopic cultural and subsequent literary history that the character can 'stick' to anybody who might identify as part of an oppressed people, even in cases where two people may then disagree with each other's application (such as in Rodó and Retamar's cases). Caliban's 'adhesive' is the concept almost at its purest – dimensionless, unrestricted, and, as Hugo put it, 'arabesque'.[73] This form does not explode during a pivotal scene near the close of the play, after scene upon scene of tension, but it is present from the very beginning, submerging the audience from the outset and anchored by events that we are only privy to through Prospero's exposition. The equivalent of the anger present in *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice* has already been dealt with – perhaps suppressed – in *The Tempest*, and we are left with what is clearly quite a piteous spectacle. This is not a tale of two ideologies clashing, but of what happens after that moment, when the subjugated party is coming to terms with a life which is comparatively cruel and unfamiliar to what they had imagined for themselves. Alternatively, the audience is left with a character who has experienced this cruel and

[72] The very concepts of colonialism and imperialism suggest examples where a majority – be that a class of people or a race – are oppressed by a select minority – be that a monarch or a colonial governor.
[73] Hugo, *William Shakespeare*, p. 265.

unfamiliar way of life, but who still volunteers to continue in Prospero's service, becoming entirely defeated and submissive. The sad result is a character dripping in 'adhesive', who, from the moment he enters the action, and for every moment after that, is leaving sticky footprints all over the island he once called his own.

4. Katherina
'For she is changed, as she had never been.': Early 'Adhesiveness' and the Many Adaptations of *The Taming of the Shrew*

The Taming of the Shrew presents an unusual prospect for any interested party looking at the afterlife of Shakespeare's plays, or the 'adhesiveness' of some of his more unfairly treated characters. All of the usual ingredients are present: some measure of excessive punishment is exacted against a character whose supposed (or actual) crimes do not seem to warrant that reaction, creating a 'surplus' with an 'adhesive' quality which 'sticks' to the audience. This may inspire an immediate emotional outburst, or, perhaps, a long-burning desire to respond to what the audience has seen, often through the medium of literary output, such as a prequel, a sequel, or another form of adaptation.

What makes *The Taming of the Shrew* so unusual, however, is the way in which the final products, the responses to the text, have manifested themselves. Not only is there a sister play (or a distant cousin, depending on your view) of *The Shrew*, in the form of the contemporary and anonymous *The Taming of A Shrew*, a possible reconstruction of Shakespeare's original, but there exists too a sequel written within Shakespeare's own lifetime. John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize, or The Tamer Tamed*, penned and performed in the early 1600s, may be no more than an example of playwrights 'borrowing' ideas from one another, but its temporal proximity to *The Shrew* suggests that Fletcher felt compelled to reply to Shakespeare's original. There may be nothing more to this compulsion, on Fletcher's part, than sensing an opportunity to make money from contrarianism, but his business sense may be an indicator of wider public opinion about gender, and about *The Shrew* in particular.

In any case, the mere existence of *The Woman's Prize* demonstrates that 'adhesiveness' is not simply the result of a modern audience witnessing events written for the people of early-modern London, who possess (allegedly) a different sensibility from our own. Indeed, Fletcher's sequel is evidence of a society interested in debating the pros and cons of different issues which affected their communities, and which, wittingly or not, could be provoked to discussion by a trip to the theatre. Where Shakespeare presented one perspective, that of a man taming his new wife, Fletcher tasked himself with presenting another, of a wife taming

the same husband from Shakespeare's text. The popularity and controversy surrounding both plays demonstrates that this method of playwriting, of trying to provoke a debate, though obviously not universal to every play written during the period, was at least a commercially successful one.[1]

It is perhaps through *The Shrew* that we may see the beginning of a pattern emerging, of Shakespeare using the dramatic form of comedy as a vehicle for asking questions and inspiring debates. Without the tight judicial balance which a playwright such as Ben Jonson might employ, we are left with open ends, morally ambiguous characters, and hanging questions. In the case of *The Shrew*, Shakespeare calls, and Fletcher answers. However, if *The Shrew* is the start of a pattern, then why does it stand alone in his oeuvre as the only play to inspire such a response within his lifetime? What happened to Fletcher's response to *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice*, or *The Tempest*? It is the intention of this chapter to explore what may be a prototypical example of 'adhesiveness', and how this example, despite being written before the instances discussed in previous chapters, may be one of Shakespeare's most effective in terms of to whom, and, more importantly, when, the 'adhesiveness' applies.

The answer may lie with the relative crudeness of *The Shrew*'s composition. Where Shakespeare subtly presents characters such as Malvolio and Caliban in the sub-plots of their respective plays, being subordinate to the romantic, and typical, main plot, *The Shrew* forces its 'adhesive' subject, Katherina, to be the star of the show from the outset. Though some may herald Petruchio as their hero – especially of some idealised and forgotten version

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[1] The 1631 quarto edition of *The Taming of the Shrew* states on the title page 'As it was acted by his Majesties Servants at the Blacke Friers and the Globe'. If one takes 1594 as the latest possible date of *The Shrew*'s publication, and 1609 as the earliest possible date of the King's Men performing at Blackfriars, then this title page suggests that the play was, at the very least, popular for fifteen years.
When the King's Men attempted to revive *The Woman's Prize* in 1633, the material offended the Master of Revels, Sir Henry Herbert, so much that he 'sent a warrant by a messenger of the chamber to suppress The Tamer Tamd'. Regardless, Fletcher's play returned in some form in the 1660s, and 'took precedence over its source', Shakespeare's original, which, just a few years later, was rewritten by John Lacy into the prose *Sauny the Scot; or, The Taming of the Shrew* so that it would seem 'a better companion piece for Fletcher's spin-off'.
William Shakespeare, 'A Wittie and Pleasant Comedie called *The Taming of the Shrew*' (London: W. S., 1631), *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://liverpool.idm.oclc.org/login?url?url=https://www-proquest-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/books/wittie-pleasant-comedie-called-taming-shrew-as/docview/2240899562/se-2?accountid=12117> [accessed 17th December 2020].
Moving Shakespeare Indoors: Performance and Repertoire in the Jacobean Playhouse, ed. by Andrew Gurr and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 1.
Meg Powers Livingston, 'Herbert's Censorship of Female Power in Fletcher's "The Woman's Prize"', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 13 (2001), 213-232, p. 215.
Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation and Authorship, 1660-1769* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 23.

of masculinity and patriarchal dominance – it is impossible to ignore how the action of the play always comes back to Katherina's responses. Petruchio is the primary agent of the comedy – he does things which move the plot along – but those things happen to Katherina. The sub-plot depends on, and waits for, her transformation. Her long speech towards the end of the play, by far the longest of the entire piece, cements her status as the play's focus, as she is given the opportunity to elaborate on (mockingly or otherwise) her newfound submission. One may feel that Shylock is the focus of *The Merchant of Venice* through his presence and his treatment at the hands of the other characters, but Katherina is granted the same designation from the moment the play begins – she is, after all, the 'shrew' of the play's title.

It is impossible to tell whether forcing Katherina to be the star was a deliberate choice to stir up debate, or whether it is evidence of a relatively inexperienced playwright who had not quite yet fully grasped the art of subtlety; either way, the end result cannot be ignored – here we have a play which demanded immediate responses.

The focus on Katherina in *The Shrew* is unusual. Not only does her 'adhesive' story, of an isolated character being overwhelmed by 'surplus' forces who believe her behaviour improper for the spirit of the wider text and the world of the play, seem more suitable, perhaps, as the sub-plot of one of Shakespeare's later comedies, subordinating itself to, perhaps, the romantic story of Bianca and her suitors, she is a character who resists being in such intense focus. For almost the entire play, up until her final, submissive speech, Katherina is resistant. She resists the advances of Petruchio, remarking to him on their first meeting, 'Let him that moved you hither/Remove you hence.' (II. 1. 191-2).[2] She resists amicable relationships with her father and sister, telling the former 'Talk not to me!' (II. 1. 34), and saying of the latter, 'Her silence flouts me, and I'll be revenged.' (II. 1. 29). She resists the play itself, even if, as Robert Heilman would have us believe, *The Shrew* is a 'farce' expanding towards a 'comedy of character'.[3] It would be very difficult to find another Shakespearean character who is so unsuited and so unwilling to reside within the action of their play, who seems to resist Shakespeare's pen even as he writes her into existence. Indeed, throughout the play, it is clear that Katherina would rather be anywhere other than

[2] William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. by Ann Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). All further references to *The Taming of the Shrew* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.
[3] Robert Heilman, 'The Taming Untamed, or, The Return of the Shrew', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 27 (1966), 147-161, p. 158.

where she is found. Despite all of this, Shakespeare makes her the star of the play, forcing her front and centre and having the main plot revolve around her, rather than her sister, Bianca, who seems much more suited to the role – and situation – of the conventional comedic lead.

Unlike the 'adhesive' subjects of later comedies, who, as Logan Pearsall Smith describes them, 'put the gay music of these comedies a little out of tune',[4] Katherina's designation as the star of the main plot has her conducting the music, and, rather than putting something 'a little out of tune', the song is abrasive from the beginning. Understanding her position within the community of *The Shrew* is fundamental for hearing her song, and for recognising why it sounds the way that it does. With Katherina, Shakespeare presents a character whose personality is 'ugly' by the standards of those around her, notably the men. Tranio describes her as 'curst and shrewd' (I. 1. 171), Hortensio claims that she is so 'froward' that he 'would not wed her for a mine of gold' (I. 2. 86-8), and Gremio acknowledges that the task of wooing her is more arduous than 'Alcides' twelve [labours]' (I. 2. 251). Even her own father refers to her as a 'hilding of a devilish spirit' (II. 1. 26), whose very existence leads him to believe that no man was ever as 'grieved as I' (II. 1. 37). Indeed, her father's plot to forbid Bianca from marrying unless Katherina finds a suitor leads Robert Heilman to believe that Baptista sees his older daughter as a 'poor runner',[5] whose chances in life have to be boosted by handicapping those of his younger daughter. In short, Katherina has no friends, and no allies. Much like the Malvolio sub-plot of *Twelfth Night*, the action occurs when multiple characters conspire to convert this independent character to their worldview, but to which the independent character is always opposed.

No matter how vicious Katherina may seem, even binding her sister's hands to extract information from her at the beginning of Act II, scene 1, her position as the friendless opponent or antagonist to an overwhelming majority results in her becoming an 'adhesive' character. This is never so evident than during the wedding scene of Act III, scene 2. When Petruchio is late for his own wedding, even Baptista remarks that 'such an injury would vex a very saint' (III. 2. 28). When the bridegroom does eventually arrive, wearing 'a new hat and an old jerkin; a pair of old breeches thrice turned; a pair of boots that have been candle-cases,

[4] Logan Pearsall Smith, *On Reading Shakespeare* (London: Constable & Co, 1933), p. 96.
[5] Heilman, 'The Taming Untamed', p. 156.

one buckled, another laced' (III. 2. 41-3), his appearance and behaviour are enough for Baptista to refer to him as a 'shame to your estate,/An eye-sore to our solemn festival' (III. 2. 90-1). Despite all of this, however, not one wedding guest intervenes on Katherina's behalf, each 'having their own strong reasons for wishing her gone',[6] as Pamela Allen Brown puts it. Being without allies allows Petruchio to establish 'complete hegemony over his new wife',[7] whisking her away to his house in the country so that she becomes geographically isolated, allowing him to inflict whatever taming methods he wishes without fear of interruption.

Petruchio's methods, especially of isolating his target from her family, have a surprising parallel in reality. As Eleanor Hubbard has illustrated, in May 1589, Christopher Percy married the wealthy widow Margery Gore, under the false pretence of also being independently wealthy. Percy's true intentions were to take his new wife's money and land for himself, as he believed was his right as her husband. Margery's subsequent refusal to sell her land forced Percy to claim that he '"would tame her & pull downe her peacocke feathers"',[8] and he set about behaving irrationally in order to unsettle her wits. Not entirely dissimilar to Petruchio's insistence that 'It shall be what o'clock I say it is' (IV. 3. 189), Percy showed little regard for the regular passage of time, rising early from bed to play '"very badd prankes"', before sleeping in a chair until nine or ten o'clock. Just as Petruchio commanded Grumio 'Draw forth thy weapon' (III. 2. 225) during his own wedding, Percy, on one occasion, burst into the dining room with '"his naked Rapier & his buckler in his hands"',[9] forcing Margery's son (from her previous marriage) to see him off with a shovel. Unsatisfied with his progress, Percy decided it would be best to relocate Margery to his country house in Dorset, in an attempt at getting her away from her friends and servants in London. When she refused this request as well, Percy 'did his best to starve his wife in situ', the court being told that he forbade '"the baker Brewer victualler, woodseller or Carter to delyvr anie provision withowtt ready money to or for the said margerie… he would nott pay for any such provision"'.[10]

However, where starving Katherina seems to be particularly successful for Petruchio, Percy still could not force Margery to acquiesce to his demands. This, no doubt, was in no

[6] Pamela Allen Brown, *Better a Shrew than a Sheep: Women, Drama, and the Culture of Jest in Early Modern England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 139.
[7] Brown, *Better a Shrew than a Sheep*, p. 139.
[8] Eleanor Hubbard, '"I Will Be Master of What Is Mine Own" Fortune Hunters and Shrews in Early Modern London', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 46: 2 (2015), 331-358, p. 343.
[9] Hubbard, 'Fortune Hunters and Shrews in Early Modern London', p. 343-4.
[10] Hubbard, 'Fortune Hunters and Shrews in Early Modern London', p. 346.

small part due to her support network in London. Her family, friends, and servants, who had prayed for Margery because of how worried they were that she had '"lost her wyttes"', were a crucial voice of opposition against Percy's plan to relocate his wife to Dorset, explaining that they believed his plan was '"nott for any love that he ment to use her as his wyffe butt only to hamper her & lock her into a Chamber"'.[11] Indeed, the testimony of these individuals were instrumental when the relationship, and separation, came to court in 1590. Percy sued his wife for 'the restitution of marital rights', but Margery 'countersued for marital separation on the ground of cruelty and adultery'.[12] Happily, Margery won, and Percy was ordered to pay alimony and the full amount of legal fees.

The similarities between this case and *The Shrew* are striking, even as far as Percy being 'the only allegedly cruel husband sued in the London consistory court between 1570 and 1640' to be accused of using the specific term 'taming'. [13] However, the comparison differs at the most obvious point – Katherina fails where Margery wins. Katherina's sour relationships with her father and sister, and the desperation of the other male characters to get rid of her by any means, results in her isolation, though incomplete before Petruchio carries her off to the country, being present from the beginning. Though she seems to prefer being left alone, Katherina's isolation is what allows Petruchio, having servants under his command at his country house, easily to overwhelm her.

When Petruchio exits the wedding scene, taking Katherina with him, he frames the action as a defence of his property, 'Grumio,/Draw forth thy weapon – We are beset with thieves!/Rescue thy mistress, if thou be a man./– Fear not, sweet wench, they shall not touch thee, Kate;/I'll buckler thee against a million!' (III. 2. 224-8). However, ignoring Petruchio's antics at this point, it is clear that what is actually occurring is the capture or seizure of something which he believes not only belongs to him, but is under threat from thieves. His faux protectiveness is a poor disguise for his real intention, the rape – that is, 'the act of taking away'[14] – of his new bride. Though this is hardly shocking for a man who believes a woman is 'my goods, my chattels, […] my house,/My household-stuff, my field, my barn,/My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything' (III. 2. 219-20), what is more telling is the reaction of the other

[11] Hubbard, 'Fortune Hunters and Shrews in Early Modern London', p. 344-5.
[12] Hubbard, 'Fortune Hunters and Shrews in Early Modern London', p. 347.
[13] Hubbard, 'Fortune Hunters and Shrews in Early Modern London', p. 347.
[14] Samuel Johnson, 'rape', *A Dictionary of the English Language, 1755* [online], accessible at: <https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/page-view/?i=1637> [accessed 3rd February 2021].

characters to Petruchio's obvious ploy. Nobody objects, and Gremio even finds what has happened so amusing that he should 'die with laughing' (III. 2. 230) if it went on any longer. As such, Katherina is easily manoeuvred into isolation.

As will be seen, isolation, socially and geographically, was clearly an important issue to address for Fletcher's *The Tamer Tamed*.[15] However, how does one reconcile the ending of *The Shrew* when writing its sequel? At the close of Shakespeare's play, Katherina instructs the other women to 'place your hands below your husband's foot […] [if] it may do him ease' (V. 2. 177-9). As though he were confirming the result of Petruchio's taming of her, Hortensio, with the penultimate line of the play, remarks 'thou hast tamed a curst shrew' (V. 2. 188). If Fletcher were to write *The Tamer Tamed* without having Katherina perform a second dramatic reversal, how could he present the story of Petruchio himself being tamed? Just as Arnold Wesker removed Shylock's conversion-as-punishment from *The Merchant*,[16] part of his own 'adhesive' reaction to Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, Fletcher chooses simply to remove the problem completely, establishing Katherina's death very early on. This, along with electing to move the action from Padua to London and making Petruchio a more outright domestic tyrant (Tranio pities the 'poor gentlewomen' to be matched to 'this dragon' (I. 1. 7-8)),[17] may be, as Hubbard suggests, evidence of 'how unlikely *The Taming of the Shrew*'s happy ending seemed to early modern Londoners'.[18]

Although, with Wesker and Fletcher alike, we may never know the reasons behind the elision of something so important to Shakespeare's original, it is clear that both authors found their respective problem unpalatable, unresolvable, or both. Fletcher's hurried disposal of Katherina at the beginning of his play is evidence of his wishes for the audience to forget all about her, and focus their attention on the new 'shrew', Maria. When Moroso, Sophocles, and Tranio are discussing Katherina in the first scene, she is only ever referred to as his 'other wife' (I. 1. 16) or his 'first wife' (I. 1. 31), and only to establish Maria's position as his new wife. Though *The Shrew* could potentially be seen as ending cordially, Fletcher wants to make it apparent that this would never have lasted (or that it was entirely improbable in the first

[15] Fletcher's 'Katherina', Maria, calls on her allies when she feels threatened by Petruchio. The strength of those alliances is part of what convinces him to begin agreeing to her concessions. Whenever she needs it, she has help from others.
[16] Arnold Wesker, *The Merchant* (London: Methuen, 1983).
[17] John Fletcher, *The Tamer Tamed*, ed. by Lucy Munro (London: Methuen Drama, 2010). Drama Online ebook. All further references to *The Tamer Tamed* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.
[18] Hubbard, 'Fortune Hunters and Shrews in Early Modern London', p. 356.

place), and that Katherina's 'daily hue and cries upon him […] forced him blow as high as she' (I. 1. 18-20), and that, even though she is dead, he is still scared of her:

> the bare remembrance of his first wife […]
> Will make him start in's sleep, and very often
> Cry out for cudgels, cowl-staves, anything,
> Hiding his breeches out of fear her ghost
> Should walk and wear 'em yet' (I. 1. 31-6).

Of Maria, the new wife, Sophocles states, 'He will bury her,/Ten pounds to twenty shillings, within this three weeks' (I. 1. 47-8), reaffirming the severity of his new tyrannous behaviour and hinting at what/who killed Katherina.

Though the first scene of Fletcher's play hints at what may have happened after *The Taming of the Shrew*, the epilogue of one of the most recent responses to Katherina's treatment, Anne Tyler's *Vinegar Girl*,[19] gives a more concrete answer. Framing itself with the sub-title '*The Taming of the Shrew* retold',[20] *Vinegar Girl* details a modern version of Shakespeare's original, with the American Kate Battista being persuaded to marry Russian scientist Pyotr Cherbakov for the sake of a visa, and her father's research project. Tyler's reimagining presents less of the taming of Kate than her listless resignation to the new status quo, and the Epilogue follows suit in that regard. Told from the perspective of Kate and Pyotr's young son, Louie, the final chapter presents both parents as esteemed prize winners in their respective fields, and ends with an image of the pair 'side by side and very close together, neither one in front or behind, and they were holding hands and smiling'.[21] Though this relatively happy ending seems overly saccharine compared to Shakespeare's own, it follows suitably from the previous chapters. *Vinegar Girl*'s message appears to be one of compromise on both sides. However, one does have to ask what exactly Pyotr has given up to earn a visa, a wife, a career, and a family, especially at the cost of Kate's freedom (though, rather apathetically, she gives this up voluntarily).

Though it is impossible to know whether Shakespeare or Fletcher was aware of the Percy-Margery case, one of the great differences between *The Shrew* and *The Tamer Tamed* is the number of allies each respective shrew can count on. Katherina, as previously stated, has

[19] Anne Tyler, *Vinegar Girl* (London: Vintage, 2017).
[20] Tyler, *Vinegar Girl*, title page.
[21] Tyler, *Vinegar Girl*, p. 263.

nobody to call on, and finds herself very easily manoeuvred into further isolation and victimhood. Not only does Katherina possess no allies, but she is automatically in competition, or 'battle', with Bianca, in so far as she represents the 'other woman' of the play. Bianca's position as the exact opposite of Katherina, and as the perfect example of a well-behaved (thus, most desirable) woman, means that, at some point, they will be in competition with each other, at least in the eyes of the men. By contrast, Fletcher's Maria is able to summon a battalion of 'fiery' (II. 3. 41) women to defend her, led by one who 'flayed her husband in her youth, and made/Reins of his hide to ride the parish' (II. 3. 44-5). With the support of her allies, Maria is able to triumph where Katherina could not, and, by the end of the play, she is able to claim 'I have done my worst, and have my end. Forgive me;/From this hour make me what you please. I have tamed ye,/And now am vowed your servant' (V. 4. 44-6). Petruchio, though a little unsure whether or not this is yet another one of Maria's tricks, repents:

> PETRUCHIO. [To Maria] Never no more your old tricks?
> MARIA. Never, sir.
> PETRUCHIO. You shall not need, for, as I have a faith,
> No cause shall give occasion. (V. 4. 52-4)

Fletcher's play ends with a sort of recognition and mutual respect between Maria and Petruchio, which, in turn, encourages the happy resolution of the play's sub-plot: Livia, inspired by the actions of Maria, confronts and avoids an arranged marriage to Moroso, and marries Roland, her husband of choice. The long-fought victory of Maria and her allies clearly encourages agency in the other women around her, an inversion of the end of Shakespeare's play. In *The Shrew*, Katherina's long expression of obedience at the close of the play comes as a reaction to the behaviour of two other women, Bianca and Hortensio's wife, the Widow. Both women, though they had started the play as much more amiable to the whims of men (Bianca is invariably described throughout as 'beautiful' (I. 2. 114), 'fair' (I. 2. 169), and of 'beauteous modesty' (I. 2. 248)), have started to display signs of shrewish behaviour. When summoned by their husbands, both refuse to come, with Bianca stating that she is 'busy, and she cannot come' (V. 2. 82), while the Widow is concerned that her husband has 'some goodly jest in hand' (V. 2. 91). Just as it seems that Petruchio has somehow solved the problem of Katherina's shrewishness, two more shrews appear.

Marianne Novy sees Katherina's long speech at the close of the play as evidence of her playfulness, having 'learned to play her husband's games'. This, by default, suggests that the other two women are 'refusing to play', and that they are as effective a block of what they refer to as 'a silly pass' and 'a foolish duty' (V. 2. 124-5) as Malvolio is attempting to be with regard to the cakes and ale of *Twelfth Night*. Though such behaviour, as is demonstrated by these two characters at the play's close, is described by Novy as bringing 'anticomic language' to a 'comic stage',[22] killjoys are not uncommon in a comedy of this type, with one of the more prominent actions being the expulsion of a festive blocker. What is unusual about these two examples, however, is the timing of their appearance at the end of *The Shrew*. Katherina's shrewish behaviour, the original blocker of any sort of comic resolution, has been expelled, but, in its place, two more examples have sprung up.

After all Petruchio's work, not only has the problem of 'unruly women' returned, but it has doubled. Perhaps Shakespeare is only making a point about what he believes is society's true perception of women, that they are inherently 'shrewish' without 'proper guidance'. Yet, an ulterior message is revealed when the two new shrews appear in such close proximity to Katherina's speech: if it is to prove, in the long term, ultimately ineffective, what is the point of taming? Katherina's speech may impress the men in the room, but Petruchio makes it clear that the other two husbands will remain stuck with their newly shrewish wives:

> Come, Kate, we'll to bed.
> We three are married, but you two are sped.
> [*To Lucentio*] 'Twas I won the wager, though you hit the white,
> And being a winner, God give you good night. (V. 2. 184-7)

Katherina says nothing in response to this, nor has she said anything since her long speech about submission. Her speech focuses primarily on the debt that wives owe their husbands, 'as the subject owes the prince' (V. 2. 155), and the negative affect that being a shrew has on their physical appearance, '[blotting] thy beauty as frosts do bite the meads' (V. 2. 139). This, along with the claim that a woman's 'lances are but straws,/Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare' (V. 2. 173-4), seeks to reposition the now supposedly submissive Katherina as physically more attractive and more pliable to the men of the play,

[22] Marianne Novy, 'Patriarchy and Play in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 9: 2 (1979), 264-80, p. 275.

prompting the approving 'Why, there's a wench!' (V. 2. 180) from Petruchio, and ''Tis a good hearing when children are toward' (V. 2. 182) from Vincentio. In short, this final speech, and *The Shrew*'s ending as a whole, becomes unpalatable to an audience through Katherina's new palatability to men, achieved through her obedience and compliance.

What we are left with is a resolution for one pair of characters, Katherina and Petruchio, but not for the play as a whole. Bianca and the Widow's appearance at the end of the play as new shrews is almost immaterial when searching for a 'satisfactory' resolution to the play, as, regardless of their arrival, we are still left with a strong-minded character in Katherina who has been broken to submission through inhumane 'taming' methods. This alone is the 'unequal' opposition to Katherina, and what mars the supposed happy ending for these characters. By also including Bianca and the Widow as foils to the new Katherina, however, the audience is left wondering about the necessity and the humanity – indeed, the justice – of what they have just witnessed.

The Shrew, *A Shrew*, and related plays

The Shrew's sister play, *The Taming of A Shrew*, also features Katherina's speech about submission towards the conclusion, though, in this case, the shrewishness of Bianca (here referred to as Emelia) is made even more implicit. After Katherina has left the stage with Petruchio/Fernando, Emelia asks her husband why he looks so down:

> EMELIA. How now Polidor in a dump, what saist thou man?
> POLIDOR. I say thou art a shrew.
> EMELIA. Thats better then a sheepe.
> POLIDOR. Wel since tis don let it go, come lets in.[23]

Written by Shakespeare or not, *A Shrew*'s version of Bianca clearly undercuts the message of obedience that Katherina is trying to convey, who, very early on, seemed to submit to her new match, having 'livde too long a maid'.[24] Leah Marcus takes this point one step further, and remarks that this exchange 'looks very much as though [Kate's sister] has won', and

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[23] *A Pleasant Conceited Historie, called The taming of a Shrew. As it was sundrie times acted by the Right honorable the Earle of Pembrook his servants* (London: P. S., 1596), p. 26, *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://liverpool.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/books/pleasant-conceited-historie-called-taming-shrew/docview/2240906486/se-2?accountid=12117> [accessed 12th January 2021].
[24] *A Pleasant Conceited Historie, called The taming of a Shrew*, p. 7.

makes it clear that 'she finds Kate's speech ridiculous'.[25] From this exchange between Emelia and Polidor, *A Shrew* seems to end with a sense of accord and accommodation, as the latter is willing to accept the status quo rather than be inspired to undertake a taming of his own. This situation suggests that either taming is not for everyone, or that Polidor believes the effort expended is not worth the final result, perhaps being entirely dissatisfied (or unconvinced) by the final result.

Even the success of Petruchio/Fernando's taming methods are called into question in *A Shrew*, as Katherina ends her speech by *actually* placing her hand under her husband's foot, which prompts Petruchio/Fernando to react, seemingly out of embarrassment, 'Inough sweet, the wager thou hast won,/And they I am sure cannot deny the same.'[26] Either Petruchio/Fernando's taming methods are so successful as to inspire total and physical capitulation in Katherina, or his new wife is consciously making a deliberate gesture 'to help her husband win the bet'.[27] Once again, we find a conclusion asking 'What is the point of taming?'

Fletcher was not the only playwright who felt that certain aspects of *The Shrew* were in discordance with later portions of the play. John Lacy's *Sauny the Scot; or, The Taming of The Shrew*, believed to be first performed in 1667, sees Shakespeare's play rewritten into prose, and with some key changes to certain characters and events. Katherina, here referred to as Margaret, is more openly hostile to her sister, demanding that she hand over her 'Necklace, and those Pendants, I'll have that whisk too', leaving Bianca with naught but an 'old Handkercheif'.[28] Bianca meekly acquiesces, telling Margaret that she will 'resign 'em freely' to 'purchase your Kindness', which only encourages the older sister to tell her, 'You flattering Gypsie, I could find in my Heart to slit your dissembling Tongue'.[29] It is quickly established that referring to Bianca as a 'proud-Slut' and a 'Huswife'[30] is not all that is in Margaret's arsenal, as she accompanies insults with threats of physical violence, such as 'I'll beat you to Clouts, and pinch thee like a Fairy' and 'I could find in my Heart to dash thy

[25] Leah Marcus, 'The Shakespearean Editor as Shrew-Tamer', *English Literary Renaissance*, 22: 2 (1992), 177-200, p. 188.
[26] *A Pleasant Conceited Historie, called The taming of a Shrew*, p. 26.
[27] Marcus, 'The Shakespearean Editor as Shrew-Tamer', p. 188.
[28] John Lacy, 'Sauny the Scot; or, *The Taming of the* Shrew' (London: B. Bragge, 1708), p. 11, *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, accessible at: <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0112829714/ECCO?u=livuni&sid=ECCO&xid=48c84d86&pg=3> [accessed 2nd February 2021].
[29] Lacy, 'Sauny the Scot', p. 11.
[30] Lacy, 'Sauny the Scot', pp. 10-11.

Teeth down thy Throat',[31] creating a 'contest' which seems more 'equal' when she comes up against a Petruchio who also threatens physical violence.

In the world of Lacy's play, violence begets violence. Petruchio's first meeting with Margaret has him instructing his servant, Sauny, to 'get me a Stick' so that he may threaten his would-be wife, 'by this hand, deny to Promise before your Father, I'll not leave you a whole Rib, I'll make you do't and be glad on't'.[32] When her father enters the room, he quietly reminds her of this threat, 'Here comes your Father, never make denial, if you do, you know what follows'.[33] Another crucial change comes towards the end of the wedding scene. Unlike Shakespeare's original, where Katherina says nothing when she is forced to exit with Petruchio, Lacy gives Margaret a single line before she exits, pleading to the wedding guests, 'Will none of you help me?'[34] Though nothing comes from this line (her father responds, after she has left, with the same 'Nay let 'em go, a couple of quiet ones'[35] as is present in *The Shrew*), its inclusion only adds to the sense of tragedy bubbling under the surface of this scene. Here is a new bride being kidnapped and taken into isolation, yet none of her family is willing to speak out or assist her, despite her, in this instance, specifically requesting help. Margaret's line alone knocks this scene's sense of humour out of balance.

Petruchio's taming methods in *Sauny the Scot* largely follow *The Shrew*'s example, and Margaret seems to have been tamed, though Act V begins with a scene entirely unlike anything in Shakespeare's play. Margaret and Bianca are alone, and the older sister is explaining how she has been abused by her husband. Bianca initially thinks better of the nature of men, but Margaret warns and instructs her:

> Trust him and hang him, they're all alike: Come, thou shalt be my Scholar, learn to Frown, and cry out for Unkindness, but brave Anger, thou hast a Tongue, make use on't; Scold, Fight, Scratch, Bite, anything, still take Exceptions at all he does, if there be Cause or not; if there be reason for't he'll Laugh at thee. I'll make Petruchio glad to wipe my Shoes, or walk my Horse, e're I have done with him.[36]

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[31] Lacy, 'Sauny the Scot', p. 11.
[32] Lacy, 'Sauny the Scot', p. 17.
[33] Lacy, 'Sauny the Scot', p. 17.
[34] Lacy, 'Sauny the Scot', p. 25.
[35] Lacy, 'Sauny the Scot', p. 25.
[36] Lacy, 'Sauny the Scot', p. 52.

Not only is Margaret proving that Petruchio's methods thus far have been unsuccessful, and that her acquiescence has been false, but Lacy has begun seeding Bianca's 'sudden' transformation into a shrew at the play's close. In this play, her shrewishness is explicitly a result of following Margaret's example.

Lacy's play, like Shakespeare's and Fletcher's, sees the value of having allies, or the hopelessness of having none. In open rebellion against her husband, Margaret tells him, 'I am at home now […] your Patient Wife will make you no more Sport; she has a Father will allow her Meat and Lodging',[37] and that she looks forward to telling the world 'what a fine Gentleman you are; how Valiantly you, and half a Dozen of your Men, got the better of a single Woman, and made her lose her Supper'.[38] Petruchio, claiming that she has been drinking, simply ignores her, and laughs at her chiding. The allies she seeks never come to her assistance, and so Petruchio can continue with his torments as he so wishes.

Only after Petruchio threatens, before Margaret's family, to bury his wife alive does she finally relent,[39] claiming that now she will become 'your humble Handmaid'.[40] Her submission comes shortly after one last appeal to whom she believes are her allies: 'Father, Sister, Husband, Are you all Mad? Will you expose me to open shame? Rogues set me down you had best.'[41] Petruchio alone answers her plea, and only to torment her further. The final scene after the wagers does not feature a lengthy speech by Margaret, in the style of Katherina, as she condenses her moral to 'Fie, Ladies, for shame, How dare you infringe that Duty which you justly owe your Husbands; they are our Lords, and we must pay 'em Service'.[42] Margaret's previous discussion with Bianca has had its intended effect, however, as she claims that she did not come at her husband's behest because 'I have been my Sister's Scholar a little'.[43]

Lacy's play makes definite efforts towards 'fixing' aspects of Shakespeare's original, but only as an attempt at correcting inconsistencies, or making the material better suited to

[37] Lacy, 'Sauny the Scot', p. 53.
[38] Lacy, 'Sauny the Scot', p. 54.
[39] Petruchio's threat to bury his wife alive, claiming that she has died, echoes one of his taming stratagems in Fletcher's *A Shrew*. Petruchio, desperately trying to tame his new wife, pretends to have died to provoke her grief.
[40] Lacy, 'Sauny the Scot', p. 60.
[41] Lacy, 'Sauny the Scot', p. 59.
[42] Lacy, 'Sauny the Scot', p. 63.
[43] Lacy, 'Sauny the Scot', p. 63.

be followed by Fletcher's sequel.[44] There still remain uncomfortable questions of how deserving Margaret has been of such cruel behaviour, despite Lacy's attempts at making her a more openly hostile character, and how Margaret goes from being tamed at the close of the play, to being dead and apparently untamed at the beginning of Fletcher's adaptation. In fact, where Lacy believes he may have created a semblance of balance by making Margaret more physically violent, he then immediately undoes his own work by making his Petruchio even more of a tyrant. Furthermore, by giving Margaret opportunities to plead with her family for assistance, Lacy makes her isolation seem even more tragic than before. If anything has been achieved, it is to retain our 'adhesive' reaction to Margaret *despite* her increased hostility, by similarly raising the hostility, or the 'unequal contest', against her. Neither a rewrite nor a sequel manages to satisfactorily answer the difficult or uncomfortable questions Shakespeare's original presents to the audience.

If rewrites and sequels, both modern and contemporary, struggle adequately to 'resolve' *The Taming of the Shrew*'s ending, how can one read it without those interjections? If we are to take Katherina's word as her new truth, that women are 'Unapt to toil and trouble' (V. II. 165) and, therefore, should behave more agreeably, are we inclined to celebrate such a reversal? Though this particular play is not used as an example, C. L. Barber's *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* suggests that we should indeed be satisfied by this ending. In Katherina, we have a figure of comedy 'in whom the evils potential in a social organization are embodied, recognised and enjoyed during a period of licence, and then in due course abused, ridiculed, and expelled'.[45] In short, from Barber's perspective, Katherina's transformation is not just welcome, but expected. A semblance of order has been restored, and dangerous energy has been banished. However, 'order' in this sense involves wives obeying their husbands, and the energy that must be tamed is that of free thought. Bianca and the Widow both *choose* not to obey their new husbands at the play's close, defying what we are to believe in terms of 'order' by expressing their own dangerous energy: that of independence and resistance.

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[44] Lacy's play ends with a short verse introducing Fletcher's play: 'Now let us in, and Eat, the Work is done,/Which neither Time nor Age can wear from Memory;/I've *Tam'd the Shrew*, but will not be asham'd,/If next you see the very *Tamer Tam'd*.', p. 70.

[45] C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959; reprinted 2012), p. 190. ProQuest ebook.

Furthermore, where one may feel there is a 'curious appropriateness'[46] to the expulsion of later 'adhesive' characters, such as Malvolio and Shylock,[47] the only punishment that seems to befit Katherina's 'crimes' is making her have prolonged interaction with a man for whom she has no respect. Petruchio's more extreme methods, of isolation, starvation, and sleep deprivation, work towards the same consequence as those used against later 'adhesive' characters, to transform dangerous energy. Though how 'appropriate' an expulsion method is does not lessen the extent of the cruelty exacted, there has been, at the very least, some thought been put into it. Katherina's role in Petruchio's life (that of providing wealth and status) results in her actual person being of so little significance that her taming merits no specific forethought. Indeed, one could imagine any of Shakespeare's 'festive blockers' being 'tamed' and expelled by isolation, starvation, and sleep deprivation.

It is not just because of Petruchio's methods, which must still be regarded as unimaginably cruel, that one can feel a sense of tragedy in this instance, but through their relative banality. Petruchio really does feel very little for Katherina, so little, in fact, that she can be handled in such a generic manner, as he claims, before her family (and perhaps they are present), that she is 'my goods, my chattels […]/My household-stuff' (III. 2. 219-20). As in the Percy-Margery case, this marriage is for one thing only – money. Petruchio states his intentions very plainly when he is first introduced to the other male characters, remarking that he has 'come to wive it wealthily in Padua;/If wealthily, then happily in Padua' (I. 2. 72-3). In this respect, he is most successful. Like a contractor hired to remove a blockage which is preventing the 'comedy' of the play from taking place, Petruchio is paid in instalments – 'twenty thousand crowns' (II. 2. 118) now, and a further 'twenty thousand crowns' (V. 2. 113) later, when the job is done, and Baptista can no longer recognise his daughter, 'For she is changed, as she had never been' (V. 2. 115). From Baptista's perspective, her new identity has entirely erased her previous one, becoming somebody she 'had never been'. For both men, the exchange has benefits, as a 'mercantile household' joins with 'the landed gentry',

[46] Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, p. 291.

[47] Malvolio, a vain killjoy who opposes the festive atmosphere of *Twelfth Night*, has his vanity exploited, and he is expelled through laughter and ridicule. Shylock, a proud Jewish moneylender, is forcibly converted to Christianity and has his goods confiscated.

money in exchange for 'the status or symbolic capital that comes with land'.[48] In this equation, Katherina is secondary, a 'surplus' part of the deal.

In comparison to the actual scolds and shrews of the period, whose punishments more often included physical violence of an extreme level,[49] the non-specific methods of Petruchio are almost tame by comparison, as both Katherina and the audience are '"gentled" and manipulated' into applauding the reinstatement of the 'heterosexual bond that women should accept their inferiorization'.[50] Regardless of what Petruchio's methods are, there is a fundamental truth beneath, or behind, them, which ensures Katherina's status as an 'adhesive' character: they come from, or are exacted through, oppression and tyranny. It does not matter if Petruchio's techniques can be considered as mild or ordinary compared with the standards of the time when the root issue remains the same. Katherina is *forcefully* transformed. Her very existence, out of place with what society expects from her, is made to fit the mould, defeated in the 'unequal contest'. A major part of the tragedy of this conclusion is that, like Caliban in *The Tempest*, who swears that he will 'be wise hereafter,/And seek for grace' (V. 1. 292-3),[51] society is successful in breaking her, as she finally submits, 'My hand is ready, may it do him ease' (V. 2. 179). From here, one may imagine, as Fletcher clearly did, that such a character may never be truly changed, or, as Tyler does, that Katherina's sour behaviour was all that was preventing her happily-ever-after. The duality of these responses demonstrates how complex, uncertain, and, ultimately, tragic, an ending Shakespeare created.

For a character such as Caliban, who has proven himself to be duplicitous when it comes to the promises he makes, it is not so altogether straightforward as simply believing that he will be 'wise hereafter,/And seek for grace' (V. 1. 292-3). Katherina, who, of course, does not partake in wordplay to the same nefarious ends as Caliban, can also be questioned

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[48] Natasha Korda, 'Household Kates: Domesticating Commodities in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 47: 2 (1996), 109-131, p. 120.

[49] For further reading about the historical treatment the women accused of being scolds and shrews:
Lynda E. Boose, 'Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman's Unruly Member', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 42: 2 (1991), 179-213.
Emily Detmer, 'Civilizing Subordination: Domestic Violence and *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 48: 3 (1997), 273-94.
Elizabeth Mathie, 'Critiquing Mastery and Maintaining Hierarchy in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Studies in English Literature*, 60: 2 (2020), 257-276.

[50] Lynda E. Boose, 'Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman's Unruly Member', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 42: 2 (1991), 179-213, p. 194.

[51] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. by David Lindley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). All further references to *The Tempest* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.

regarding the authenticity of her final speech. Critics such as Coppelia Kahn, who propose that Katherina's final speech is actually a 'pompous, wordy, holier-than-thou sermon that delicately mocks the sermons her husband has delivered',[52] believe her transformation to be 'transparently false',[53] as she remains 'inwardly independent' and taking part in a game which Petruchio himself is likely privy to, both knowingly playing a 'false role'[54] in their marriage.

Such a conclusion is supported by Act IV, Scene 5, when Petruchio and Katherina are travelling. When Petruchio insists that the sun is actually the moon, and that his wife recognise it as the same, Katherina concedes seemingly out of exasperation and boredom with his antics:

> Forward, I pray, since we have come so far.
> And be it moon or sun or what you please;
> And if you please to call it a rush-candle,
> Henceforth I vow it shall be so for me. (IV. 5. 12-5)

From this point onwards, even when Petruchio asks her to speak with an old man as though he were a 'Young budding virgin' (IV. 5. 37), Katherina is obedient. According to Kahn, Katherina is now following the advice of Hortensio, who earlier advised her to 'Say as he says, or we shall never go' (IV. 5. 11), 'in order to achieve her immediate and most pressing needs: a bed, a dinner, some peace and quiet'.[55] Petruchio, who, thus far, has been consistently flouting 'conversational maxims',[56] has managed to convince, or force, Katherina into doing the same.

However, though this moment may be read as Katherina understanding what games must be played to satisfy her erratic husband, a tinge of her giving up can also be detected. If not submission, then we see resignation. Even if her final speech is read as an example of mutual cooperation with Petruchio, so that he may win his wager, there is a risk of being blinded to what led her to this point: starvation, sleep deprivation, gaslighting, and a marriage which has been 'encouraged' by virtue of her having very little say in the matter. As Penny Gay comments, 'Cruelty can be funny […] as long as one is on the dominant side,

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[52] Coppélia Kahn, *Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare* (California: University of California Press, 1981), p. 115.
[53] Kahn, *Man's Estate*, p. 116.
[54] Kahn, *Man's Estate*, p. 117.
[55] Kahn, *Man's Estate*, p. 112.
[56] Marilyn Cooper, 'Implicature, Convention, and *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Poetics*, 10 (1981), 1-14, p. 11.

and no lasting damage is done to the victim'[57]: but in *Taming of the Shew* it cannot be ascertained if either one of these prerequisites has been fulfilled. No matter how happily one may read the final scene, or how savvily one believes Katherina to be behaving here, crucial questions cannot be ignored: what price has been paid to reach this conclusion? What has all of this cost Katherina?

Other options for resolving this conclusion are, understandably, even more bleak. If Katherina is not cooperating out of a sense of patriarchal satire, or a willingness to play along with her husband's games, then she is perhaps doing so out of fear (not altogether unreasonable, considering what she has been through thus far). It is possible to imagine that her sudden transformation and lengthy speech are the result of her total breakdown, with the 'Forward, I pray' (IV. 5. 12) scene being the moment of her final capitulation. On command of her husband, 'Katherine, I charge thee, tell these headstrong women/What duty they do owe their lords and husbands' (V. 2. 130-1), she (perhaps robotically) gives the longest speech of the play, full of wisdoms about what duties a woman 'oweth to her husband' (V. 2. 156), and, following this, is completely silent, on standby for the next command.[58]

No matter how one attempts to read this final speech, it is hard to imagine how this relationship carries forwards into the future, which, though unwritten, is a key factor in how an audience reckons with the tone of a play's conclusion. An unfeasible or unsustainable ending mars what may otherwise be a 'neutralised' ending, which, in turn, has the audience leave with the 'adhesive' applied. If Katherina is cooperating with Petruchio, then for how long does she play along? If she is in love with him, then the answer is simply 'forever', but this calls into serious question the nature of love, and, once again, the methods Petruchio has

[57] Penny Gay, *As She Likes It: Shakespeare's Unruly Women* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 86.

[58] Katherina's final speech, in terms of both its conspicuous length and content, has proven hard to grapple with for directors wishing to establish a uniform tone for the whole play. If the desire is to make the play light-hearted throughout, it has become almost necessary for Katherinas to undermine the final speech in some way. In 1929, Mary Pickford added an 'expressive wink'; in 1960, Sian Phillips delivered the speech with her 'tongue slightly in cheek'; in 1972 Joan Plowright played it with a 'sarcastic inflection'. As noted by Elizabeth Schafer, Katherina's final speech can present her as 'ironic, sincere, angry, exhibitionist, lobotomised, in love, masochistic, feminist, indulgent, threatening' or having her 'eyes on the cash'. Each has the potential to be interpreted differently depending on the prejudices of the reviewer. The speech present in Jean Gascon's 1973 production, for example, was seen as both having the 'perfect light touch of cynicism' and highlighting a production that degrades women as much as '*Last Tango in Paris*'.
Ann Thompson, 'Introduction, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. by Ann Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 22.
Elizabeth Schafer, 'Introduction', in *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. by Elizabeth Schafer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 34-6.

employed to attain this result. If Katherina has been broken, either to the point of being tamed enough to deliver the speech, or utterly, then the relationship should last by virtue of little resistance, though we may hardly call this a happy or satisfying ending.

In all of these readings of the play's ending, it is clear how Katherina is an 'adhesive' character, how she leaves something with the audience which 'sticks' to them long after they have finished. Certain readings may change the makeup of this 'adhesiveness', and make some earlier parts more or less palatable, but it exists nonetheless, through the excessive manner with which Katherina is treated during her 'taming', made even more emphatic by her total isolation throughout. However one chooses to reconcile the ending, perhaps to convince ourselves that all will be well for Katherina, or that she has the upper hand after all, there is always something out of place which inspires 'adhesive' reactions. When contending with these possibilities, one finds it very easy to sympathise with Fletcher's solution – write Katherina out and start again.

In considering what form Katherina and Petruchio's relationship might take beyond the confines of the play – if, of course, Fletcher had not written her out of existence – one may find Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam* as a useful source of inspiration. First published in 1613, though likely written some years before and never performed on stage, *The Tragedy of Mariam* offers a unique insight into a Renaissance woman's role as compared to her husband, written by a female author (and, indeed, being the first extant original play written by a woman). The play follows Mariam, wife of Herod, who finds herself unexpectedly 'free' after she believes her husband to be dead. Through a combination of the scheming of Herod's sister, Salome, and her husband's unexpected return, Mariam finds herself unable to return to the life of female submission she practised before. Following further plots, Herod orders Mariam to be executed, though he is immediately regretful after the deed has been completed.

Each act is flanked by the Chorus, whose moralising seems, whether a deliberate choice by Cary or not, to be out of touch with the action of the play. Mariam opens Act I with a conflicted heart: 'So at his death your eyes true drops did rain,/Whom dead, you did not wish alive again' (I. 1. 13-4), but the Chorus condemns her for wishing for 'variety' (I. 6. 511), warning that 'no content attends a wavering mind' (I. 6. 498) and that 'Her wishes

guide her to she knows not what' (I. 6. 526).[59] The message of wifely subordination continues at the end of Act III, when the Chorus asks 'When she hath spacious ground to walk upon,/Why on the ridge should she desire to go?' (III. 3. 221-2), before making a direct comparison between impure words and thoughts with an impure body: 'Her mind if not peculiar is not chaste./For in a wife it is no worse to find,/A common body than a common mind' (III. 3. 242-4). The choric stanzas of Act V, which close the play, admit that Mariam was 'guiltless' (V. 1. 272) and remark that Herod now 'both repents her death and knows her chaste' (V. 1. 282), but this comes as such a departure from their previous overtly critical lessons as to seem patronising and purely reactive, rather than omniscient – an 'I told you so', without ever telling us so.

In Mariam's acknowledgement of her newfound freedom, we see the inverse story of *Shrew*, of a chaste wife becoming a scold. Her reputation as a good wife before this conversion should earn her much favour when Herod eventually reappears, if not for the actions of his sister, Salome, whose directness of speech cut through the play's central theme of internal conflict. While Herod agonises over the method of Mariam's execution, Salome responds with cold, Vice-like efficiency: 'Why, let her be beheaded', 'Why, drown her then', 'Then let the fire devour her' (IV. 7. 361-81). Mariam's voice, her 'tongue', like Katherina's, is her greatest sin, as Salome illustrates, 'She speaks a beauteous language, but within/Her heart is false as powder: and her tongue/Doth but allure the auditors to sin,/And is the instrument to do you wrong' (IV. 7. 429-32). This is enough to convince Herod of his decision:

> It may be so: nay, 'tis so: she's unchaste,
> Her mouth will ope to ev'ry stranger's ear:
> Then let the executioner make haste,
> Lest she enchant him, if her words he hear.
> Let him be deaf, lest she do him surprise
> That shall to free her spirit be assign'd:
> Yet what boots deafness if he have his eyes?
> Her murderer must be both deaf and blind. (IV. 7. 433-40)

[59] Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam the Fair Queen of Jewry, with The Lady Falkland: Her Life*, ed. by Barry Weller and Margaret W. Ferguson (California: University of California Press, 1994). All further references to *The Tragedy of Mariam* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.

Though Katherina is doomed by the inaction of her supposed allies, Mariam's destiny is sealed by their very involvement.

Barry Weller and Margaret Ferguson believe that this, and the dichotomy between Chorus and action, is 'the very heart of Cary's dramatic vision'. By bringing to attention to the differences between the 'moral adages of the Chorus' and the 'experience of the heroine', Cary further highlights the same variance in 'conventional wisdom' and 'the experience of all women'.[60] This description, though levelled at *The Tragedy of Mariam*, could very easily be transplanted into a discussion of *The Taming of the Shrew*, and to Shakespeare's wider canon of 'adhesive comedies', as it touches upon the concept of an author generating debate by unaffectedly presenting both sides of the argument. Not only that, but, having been written by a contemporary female author, the play opens up the possibility that a Renaissance audience may not all be on Petruchio/Herod's side, in much the same way that Ovid's discussion of Actaeon does for *Twelfth Night*, and that some women were actively thinking about their role in a heteronormative relationship. For these reasons, *The Tragedy of Mariam* becomes not just a useful text when considering *The Taming of the Shrew* and 'adhesiveness' in Shakespearean comedy as a whole, but an essential and indispensable one.

The play within the play

One of the most important distinctions to acknowledge when discussing *The Taming of the Shrew* is the Christopher Sly 'framework' which opens the play, and establishes that the world in which Katherina exists is no more than a play-within-a-play, a performance for Sly's benefit. Sly, a drunk, is tricked by a group of players into thinking that he is a 'mighty man of such descent,/Of such possessions and so high esteem' (Induction. 2. 12-3). Continuing this trick, they put on a 'pleasant comedy' (Induction. 2. 125) to 'frame [his] mind to mirth and merriment' (Induction. 2. 130). Such an introduction should be the beginning and the end of any questions about how this play should be taken: as a comedy. The Sly induction draws attention to the theatricality of Kate's taming, and that, even within this world, the events that follow are a work of fiction.

[60] Barry Weller and Margaret W. Ferguson, 'Introduction', in *The Tragedy of Mariam the Fair Queen of Jewry, with The Lady Falkland: Her Life*, ed. by Barry Weller and Margaret W. Ferguson (California: University of California Press, 1994), p. 38.

However, there remains a fundamental issue with the 'framework' as it stands in *The Taming of the Shrew*, and that is that the play never returns to it. We never learn how Sly reacts to the events he has witnessed, and so the 'real' world of the play never closes. Karen Newman describes this oddity as a 'missing frame',[61] and it is certain that any production of *The Shrew* must contend with whether to expand upon the Induction or remove the 'framework' entirely. The consequences of the half-frame as it stands are potentially very far-reaching. If one is waiting for Sly's return, there may be disappointment or confusion caused by his disappearance. However, even more disruptive is what may occur if one forgets that the play begins with Sly: his absence 'allows the audience to forget that Petruchio's taming of Kate is presented as a fiction'.[62] By drawing so much attention to the theatricality of *The Shrew*, and then never returning to it, the tension of the play as artifice is left hanging tantalisingly.

More recent productions of *The Shrew* have made Christopher Sly a more integral character, having him remain 'on stage and alert until almost the end of the taming plot, calling for the clown figure to come back on stage, commenting on the action, and even intervening to stop it when some of the characters appear about to be hauled off to prison'.[63] His declaration that what he has just watched must have been a 'vivid dream'[64] continues the concept of the taming plot being entirely artificial, and almost tells an audience how to feel about what they have also been privy to. As Leah Marcus points out, this approach 'softens some of the brutality of the taming scenes, which can then be viewed as tailored to the uncultivated tastes of Sly'.[65] By shifting some of the burden of the taming in this manner, the audience can feel relieved of some of the 'adhesive', as they are implicitly made aware that not only does the taming plot take place in an even more artificial world, but one that is definitely staging a comedy. As William Hazlitt remarked in the nineteenth century upon seeing a version of the play without Sly, 'that supreme dramatic critic', his total or partial

[61] Karen Newman, 'Renaissance Family Politics and Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*', in *Essaying Shakespeare* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 23-37, p. 37. ProQuest ebook.
[62] Newman, 'Renaissance Family Politics and Shakespeare', p. 37.
[63] Marcus, 'The Shakespearean Editor as Shrew-Tamer', p. 177.
[64] Marcus, 'The Shakespearean Editor as Shrew-Tamer', p. 178.
[65] Marcus, 'The Shakespearean Editor as Shrew-Tamer', p. 178.

absence results in nothing intimating that 'all are but shadows, the pageants of a dream',[66] and that such an absence is a loss.

Returning to Christopher Sly at the close of the play does, however, have a precedent. The anonymous *The Taming of A Shrew* takes a step back into the Sly 'framework', and features the drunk waking from what he believes was the 'bravest dreame […] that ever thou/Hardest in all thy life'.[67] He continues his review by claiming that the events were the 'best dreame/That ever I had in my life',[68] and that if his wife angers him he will tame her, now that he has learned how. This has been relatively commonplace in productions of *The Shrew* since Martin Harvey's 1913 version, played in London, which featured not only both 'ends' of the Sly framework, but kept '[him] and his attendants […] on stage, where they functioned as a surrogate audience'. Subsequent productions, such as Theodore Komisarjevsky's 1939 version, played in Stratford, had Sly make 'several abortive attempts to intervene in the action',[69] having to be restrained by his attendants. Though this threat of multiplying tamers is extant, much like the threat of multiplying shrews in both versions of the play, it is hard to equate Sly with Petruchio, and thus difficult to imagine the former succeeding in taming his wife. By having Sly, a drunk, promise that he will tame his own wife, and making him believe that the taming plot was all a dream, the world of Katherina submitting to her new husband is given as much distance from 'reality' as possible. Though this ending could hardly be called a 'neutralisation' in the style of a Jonsonian comedy, where all wrongdoers get their just deserts, this 'cancellation' of the taming plot has the same effect, wiping any 'adhesive' generated by Katherina's abuse somewhat clean, or even concealing it.

With this point in mind, we can see the value in Marcus' suggestions when it comes to the current state of *Shrew* editing: to give the reader 'both [*The Shrew* and *A Shrew*] in their entirety, one after the other',[70] or, to follow the lead of more modern productions of the play by placing the full Sly framework of *A Shrew* around the text of *The Shrew*. The latter being quite an invasive process from the perspective of likely authorial intent makes the former

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[66] William Hazlitt, '*The Taming of the Shrew* was revived here on Wednesday…', *The Examiner*, 18 May 1828, Theatrical Examiner, 321-336, p. 325. Archive.org ebook.
[67] *A Pleasant Conceited Historie, called The taming of a Shrew*, p. 26.
[68] *A Pleasant Conceited Historie, called The taming of a Shrew*, p. 27.
[69] Graham Holderness, 'Text and Performance: *The Taming of the Shrew*', in *Shakespeare in Performance*, ed. by Robert Shaughnessy (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000), 123-141, p. 124.
[70] Marcus, 'The Shakespearean Editor as Shrew-Tamer', p. 199.

automatically more preferable for a side-by-side comparison of how 'adhesiveness' is affected by a more defined conclusion, despite the time investment required by an audience to see or read both versions. The key decision that we are left with when reading or performing the play is, judging from the existence of contemporary offshoots and adaptations of *The Shrew*, as old as the play itself: to follow the 'traditional historicist' view, or that of the 'theatrical or 'deconstructionist''.[71] Though *A Shrew* offers some sort of escape for Katherina through having her exist solely in a dream world, the manner by which the play is wrapped up may seem unsatisfactory, or hurried, by some. Alternatively, though *The Shrew* ends with its 'missing frame', the 'adhesive' generated by Katherina's experiences leave one thinking about the injustice of her treatment, and her sad new state of being. This, however, may be the point, to create discussion. By removing the Sly ending, but keeping his other appearances, one is encouraged to think about questions such as the authenticity of Katherina's submission, her life beyond the play, and her treatment during it. If the play ends with 'And it was all a dream', no such questions need to be asked, because the characters no longer matter. Instead, the audience is encouraged to focus on the reactions of the drunken Sly, and the connections between the framework and the inner play, of 'wealth and poverty, impotence and power'.[72]

If Sly is watching the events unfold at the same time as the audience, then perhaps he can be considered as their representative on stage. If Shakespeare then returns to Sly at the end of the play, and has him promise to tame his own wife, then it could be construed as presuming what the audience will think or believe. Though the framework is not so artificial as to address the audience directly, as is the case in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example, even those instances leave the audience to come to their own conclusions about that particular play's quality. By removing Sly at *The Shrew*'s close, everything is left to individual interpretation, stimulating what Graham Holderness refers to as 'an invigorated sceptical consciousness'.[73]

It is perhaps clumsy, or inefficient, to leave a little of the Sly framework in at the beginning of *The Shrew* if there is not meant to be the follow-up at the end, the drunk's relevance waning somewhat when the 'framework' is incomplete. However, this may only

[71] Holderness, 'Text and Performance: *The Taming of the Shew*', pp. 138-9.
[72] Holderness, 'Text and Performance: *The Taming of the Shrew*', p. 130.
[73] Holderness, 'Text and Performance: *The Taming of the Shrew*', p. 129.

be evidence of Shakespeare experimenting with inconclusive and uncertain endings with the intention of creating a 'better' ending, ie. one that inspires debate, where its value in this sense outweighs that of having a more conclusive ending from a narrative or structural perspective. Richard Hosley, writing in the mid-twentieth century, appears to agree with this point, concluding from his own research that the play was designed without an ending to the framework, 'to avoid anticlimax, and [because of Shakespeare's] unwillingness to point the moral of shrew-taming (or any other moral) in a didactic ending'.[74] Furthermore, if *A Shrew* is truly a reconstruction of *The Shrew* written from the memory of an ambitious audience member, then it may be evidence of theatre practitioners 'completing' a narrative which they believe is originally unfinished, predicting the actions of modern productions, in which this addition is commonplace. Though the artfulness of its structural composition is crude in places, compared to later plays, *The Shrew* may be one of the first examples of its author using comedy as a vehicle for 'adhesiveness', and for generating debate about sensitive issues in early modern society. In that sense, it is just as successful as later examples, a 'blueprint' for later dramas.

Inspiring debate

The inclusion of the Christopher Sly 'framework' may be evidence of the relative crudity of *The Taming of the Shrew*'s composition from an 'adhesiveness' standpoint, as clearly pointing to the artifice of the play could be construed as labouring the point. However, it is unarguable that the play had an immediate impact. To have an 'alternate' version of the play in *The Taming of A Shrew*, and a contemporaneous sequel in John Fletcher's *The Tamer Tam'd*, demonstrates that, if nothing else, the discussion about gender inequality was a hot topic. With *The Shrew*, Shakespeare taps into that potential, both taking part in and stirring the debate.

His process, though it will be refined in later plays, remains largely the same throughout his career, and its foundations can easily be found here. Katherina is overwhelmed by excessive forces that either mean her direct harm, or will cause harm through the furthering of their own ambitions. Her final state, though hard to decipher

[74] Richard Hosley, 'Was There a 'Dramatic Epilogue' to *The Taming of the Shrew*?', *Studies in English Literature*, 1: 2 (1961), 17-34, p. 29.

entirely, is of submissiveness or resignation, even if one believes her to be merely playing along with Petruchio's games. This is achieved not just through numerical or societal superiority, but through brute force and sadism. A combination of these elements encourages an audience to feel something for her, and to think of her welfare once the play has concluded – thus, the 'adhesive', the 'surplus'. When the audience or reader leaves the world of the play, they take Katherina with them, and she begins her life beyond the boundaries of the text. This ending results in responses, sequels, and adaptations all attempting to correct, justify, or answer the questions about inequality that the play poses. Once the 'adhesiveness' of one of these characters sticks it is impossible to get rid of: such responses to the text are attempts at 'unsticking' the experience and making things right from that person's – or the audience's – own particular worldview. They are formed from equal parts inspiration and a will to put things right, to mete out proper justice for a wronged character: to rebalance the scales, and rectify the consequences of an unequal contest.

A trademark of Shakespeare's methodology in this regard is how he manages to achieve all of the above despite creating a character with whom we do not initially expect to sympathise. Katherina is cruel towards her sister, and clearly she lashes out at other characters. It is only once she is broken that other any character begins to show her respect, though it is suggested that her behaviour beforehand does inspire other women to behave shrewishly. The process of making an audience sympathise with an initially unlikeable character is not simply Shakespeare flexing his literary muscles and showing what he is capable of, but of showing of what audience members themselves are capable. From the beginning of the play to its conclusion, one may complete a transformation or a journey much the same as Katherina's own, moving from initial dislike to sympathy. The most potent 'adhesive' is created not by doing the expected, but the inverse, by showing the audience that sympathy, and justice, are for everybody, not just for the characters to whom we are led to believe are the protagonists. Penny Gay takes this concept even further in her book *As She Likes It*:

> Performance is always potentially disruptive of received readings, because in order to hold an audience's attention it must respond in subtle (or not-so-subtle) ways to the changing *Zeitgeist*. It may not always be what the audience likes, but it

> represents what the audience at least subconsciously *knows* is happening in their world.[75]

The Taming of the Shrew is not just a tale of good versus evil, or even of just gender inequality, but of the feelings of injustice formed when a character is overwhelmed by an 'unequal' element/s and forced to submit to the societally accepted status quo. If an audience finishes *The Shrew* and wonders about the fairness of its ending, then Shakespeare has achieved the desired 'adhesive' reaction, and the debate continues.

[75] Gay, *As She Likes It*, p. 3.

5. Falstaff
Falstaff, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and the Limits of 'Adhesiveness'

The final chapter of this thesis aims to introduce what at first seems to be a different element to the hitherto established formula. Whereas Malvolio, Shylock, Caliban, and Katherina are presented by Shakespeare as characters with somewhat tragic endings in realms dominated by comedy, thus creating the 'adhesive' reactions discussed in their respective chapters, Falstaff, the final subject of analysis, and his conception, subvert our expectations about how 'adhesiveness' can be created and why it 'sticks'.

Falstaff appears on stage in three of Shakespeare's plays, *Henry IV Part 1*, *Henry IV Part 2*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, though he has an off-stage presence in a fourth, *Henry V*, haunting that play with his conspicuous absence, as does the manner of his dismissal in its predecessor, *Henry IV Part 2*. Unlike the previous chapters, however, Falstaff is not a tragic character existing in a comedic world, but a comedic character operating in a very serious one. With the exception of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, where Falstaff has free rein over a city comedy, the character is squeezed into Shakespeare's chronicles of history, a vehicle for pairing fiction with historical truth.

This subversion of the pattern poses important questions about how 'adhesiveness' is created and operates. Though Hal, the future King Henry V, is no Malvolio, we are privy to a world, and a punishment, which asks: 'Is this what the steward's promised revenge on Sir Toby Belch and co. might look like?'. Within the confines of a 'festive comedy',[1] as defined by C. L. Barber, Shakespeare uses the characters discussed in previous chapters as vehicles to play with our expectation that the Saturnalian world will prevail over a shared obstacle: those who are trying to stop the festivities. In the Henry plays, we have the inverse struggle and outcome – a comedic character existing in a world of court politics and both civil and international wars, whose essence is crushed by the very machine he attempts to dance with and around. With this exploration representing such a great departure from the previous chapters, it is paramount to establish who Falstaff is, on whom he may have been based, and how that affects our notion of 'adhesiveness'.

[1] C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959; reprinted 2012). ProQuest ebook.

One possible source for both Shakespeare's 'Henriad' (*Henry IV Part 1*, *Henry IV Part 2*, and *Henry V*) and the character of Falstaff is the anonymous *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, the earliest copy of which is dated 1598 (though it was entered into the Stationers' Register in 1594, three years before the suspected earliest performance date of *Henry IV Part 1*). A 'Sir John Oldcastle', affectionately referred to as 'Jockey' by the young prince Henry, appears in this play and seems to be a prototype for Shakespeare's Falstaff. Not only does Jockey take part in robbing King Henry IV's own receivers, gaining 'a hundred pound',[2] but the young prince actively encourages this lifestyle of crime and debauchery, being the first to suggest that they spend their takings in 'the old Taverne in Eastcheape'.[3]

Indeed, in this version of history, the young prince and Jockey, at least at the beginning, are often of the same mind, encouraging each other to misdeeds. When the prince has been released from his brief stint in prison having struck the Chief Justice, he is greeted by Jockey and his other companions, Ned and Tom, who are all, 'glad to see your Grace at libertie'.[4] Here, the prince makes a promise to his followers:

> To visit mee, didst thou not know that I am a Princes sonne?
> Why tis enough for me to looke into a prison, though I come
> not in my selfe, but heres such adoo now adayes, heres
> prisoning, heres hanging, whipping, and the Divell and all: but
> I tell you sirs, when I am King, wee will have no such things,
> but my Lads, if the olde King my Father were dead, we would
> be all Kings.[5]

Jockey's response is to ask God to take the King 'to his mercie the sooner', before the prince instructs his follower Ned, who will be made the new Chief Justice under his reign, to 'hang none but pick-purses, and Horse-stealers', whilst giving commendations to 'that fellow that will stand by the High-way side couragiously, with his Sword and buckler'.[6] Though Shakespeare's prince certainly takes part in some share of the mischief, this incarnation of the character plays a more active role in the debauchery, and exercises his power as the

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[2] *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth: Containing the Honourable Battell of Agin-court* (London: Thomas Creede, 1598), fol. 2^{v}, *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://liverpool.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/books/famous-victories-henry-fifth-containing/docview/2240937351/se-2?accountid=12117> [accessed 19th October 2021].

[3] *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, fol. 3^{v}.

[4] *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, fol. 9^{r}.

[5] *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, fol. 9^{r}.

[6] *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, fol. 9^{v}.

King's son to further his companions, even going so far as promising them titles when he is crowned.

In contrast, it is Shakespeare's Falstaff who, on hearing of King Henry IV's death, promises titles to his friends in *Henry IV Part 2*:

> Away, Bardolph! Saddle my horse! Master Robert Shallow, choose what office thou wilt in the land; 'tis thine! Pistol, I will double charge thee with dignities. (V. 3. 121-4)[7]

This slight change demonstrates the difference in power dynamics, or, at least, perceived power dynamics, between Jockey/Henry and Falstaff/Hal. Jockey does not attempt to hand out titles, because he has never been led to believe he has, or will have, that power. Falstaff's immediate response to the news that King Henry IV has died is to pre-empt his promotion and exercise his new power before it has even been confirmed. Though Hal has dropped plenty of hints about his intentions (the prince chillingly responds, 'I do; I will' (II. 4. 468),[8] when Falstaff addresses his own banishment in the play-within-the-play scene in *Part 1*), Falstaff is either wilfully ignorant or completely oblivious to the threat to his future.[9]

The knight's excitement upon learning of King Henry IV's death helps solidify the feeling of 'adhesiveness' when we reach the climactic banishment scene in *Henry IV Part 2*, as the audience watches such enthusiasm get cut down. His belief that hastily appearing before the new king would show his 'earnestness of affection […] devotion […] as if there were nothing else to be done but to see him' (V. 5. 16-27) portrays him as almost childlike in his giddy anticipation. However, for the audience, who most likely has the foreknowledge of what is to come, not least because of Hal's introspective 'I know you all' (I. 2. 185)

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[7] William Shakespeare, *King Henry IV Part 2*, ed by. James C. Bulman (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2016). All further references to *King Henry IV Part 2* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.
[8] William Shakespeare, *King Henry IV Part 1*, ed. by David Scott Kastan (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2002). All further references to *King Henry IV Part 1* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.
[9] This particular line has the potential to be played in a number of ways. Robert Hardy, playing Hal in 1955, spoke 'I will' 'gently but with an unshakeable resolution', before bringing 'the fat old rascal to him in a sudden hot embrace.' Alan Howard's 1975 interpretation of Hal was described as delivering the line with 'a chilling authority that stops the old knight dead in his tracks', suggesting that Falstaff is somewhat aware of what is to come. Kenneth Branagh's 1989 film adaptation of *Henry V*, the screenplay of which is interspersed with Hal's reminiscences about his time with Falstaff, has the line delivered in Hal's mind, a ghostly echo followed by *Henry IV Part 2*'s 'I know thee not, old man', 'spoken' in the same manner. The net result, Falstaff's unease, is the same as if Hal had spoken the words out loud – the prince's silence speaks volumes.
Roger Wood and Mary Clarke, 'King Henry IV', *Shakespeare at the Old Vic: Second Season* (London: Adam and Charles Black., 1956).
Michael Billington, 'HENRY IV PART I at Stratford upon Avon', *Guardian*, 25 April 1975, p. 14.
Henry V, dir. by Kenneth Branagh (Curzon Film Distributors, 1989), scene accessible at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nFHhXrXWzY> [accessed 22nd October 2021].

soliloquy early in *Part 1*, this moment has the same 'adhesive' qualities to similar scenes discussed in previous chapters – in Falstaff's rejection, there is something almost pathetic, and painfully sad, about seeing a character so buoyed, only to be brutally cut down by a much more powerful force.

In *The Famous Victories,* Jockey's affections for the young prince are similar to Falstaff's for Hal. After the coronation of the new king, Henry V, Jockey recounts his experience of the event in glowing terms:

> Oh how it did me good to see the King
> When he was Crowned.
> Me thought his seate was like the figure of heaven,
> And his person like unto a God.[10]

However, despite the promises that the young prince made to his followers, disaster lies ahead for their companionship. Soon after, the King delivers a speech not dissimilar to Hal's infamous dismissal of Falstaff at the close of *Henry IV Part 2*, but without any of it being specifically directed at Jockey (in fact, he is not even named during the speech, whereas the other two followers, Ned and Tom, are both spoken to directly):

> I prethee Ned mend thy manners,
> And be more modester in thy tearmes,
> For my unfeined griefe is not to be ruled by thy flattering
> And dissembling talke, thou sayest I am changed,
> So I am indeed, and so must thou be and that quickly,
> Or else I must cause thee to be changed. […]
> Ah Tom, your former life grieves me,
> And makes me to abandon and abolish your company forever
> And therefore not upon pain of death to approach my presence
> By ten miles space, then if I heare well of you,
> It may bee I will doe somewhat for you,
> Otherwise looke for no more favour at my hands,
> Then at any other mans: And therefore be gone,
> We have other matters to talke on.[11]

Wordlessly, the three former companions of the new King exit the stage and the play. Though the parallels between this relationship and that of Hal and Falstaff are quite obvious, the differences are part of the key to understanding just how Falstaff's

[10] *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, fol. 13^{v}.
[11] *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, fols 13^{v}-14^{r}.

'adhesiveness' operates more effectively than Jockey's, which is barely extant, ever could. How is our perception of the young prince in *The Famous Victories* coloured by his open misdeeds, and the promises he makes to followers of new titles when he is crowned? Is he especially fond of Jockey, or does he equally, or more so, favour Ned and Tom? Jockey may be very similar to Falstaff, but the differences between this prince and Shakespeare's Hal are just as crucial when analysing Falstaff's lasting 'adhesiveness' as one of Shakespeare's most popular theatrical creations.

The 'Sir John Oldcastle' of *The Famous Victories of Henry V* is, of course, not the only source for Falstaff. In the early seventeenth century, the scholar Richard James wrote a dedicatory letter prefacing his own edition of Thomas Hoccleve's poem 'The legend and defence of ye Noble Knight and Martyr Sr John Oldcastel'. In this preface, James sets out his belief that the character Falstaff was originally based on the rebellious Lollard knight, Sir John Oldcastle:

> That in Shakespeares first shew of Harrie the fift, the person with which he undertook to playe a buffone was not Falstaffe but S^{r} Jhon [sic] Oldcastle, and that offence, being worthily taken by Personages descended from his title, as peradventure by many others also whoe putt to make an ignorant shifte of abusing S^{r} Jhon [sic] Fastolphe a man not inferior of Vertue, though not so famous in pietie as the other, who gave witnesse unto the truth of our reformation with a constant and resolute Martydom, unto which he was pursued by the Priests, Bishops, Moncks, and Friers of those days.[12]

James' claim that Oldcastle's descendants took exception to the portrayal may have resulted in the character's name being changed to Falstaff, perhaps at the insistence of the then Lord Chamberlain, William Brooke, the tenth Lord Cobham (Oldcastle's title through marriage), or 'through the intervention and agency of the Queen'.[13] The link was clearly controversial enough to warrant an explanation-cum-apology in the Epilogue of *Henry IV Part 2*, which, if nothing else, acknowledges that some had made the connection: 'Falstaff shall die of a sweat

[12] London, British Library, MS 33785 The Legend and defence of ye Noble Knight and Martyr Sr John Oldcastel. Sett forth by Richard James, fol. 2^{r-v}.
[13] David Scott Kastan, 'Introduction', in *King Henry IV Part 1*, ed. by David Scott Kastan (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2002), p. 52.

unless already 'a be killed with your hard opinions; for Oldcastle died martyr, and this is not the man' (Epilogue. 30-2).

Despite this explanation, we are left with a Falstaff who is 'inevitably colour[ed]'[14] by the proto-Protestant/Puritan Oldcastle. However, the 'adhesiveness' generated by Falstaff's conception, and, ultimately, by his dismissal at the close of *Henry IV Part 2*, has clearly had the greater effect: the 'historical fact' of Oldcastle has given way to the 'compelling dramatic reality that had – more or less – preserved him on stage'.[15] Falstaff, the imitation, has outlived Oldcastle, the genuine article: fiction has created a stronger legacy than fact. As David Scott Kastan notes in his Introduction to the Arden edition of *Henry IV Part 1*, 'there are more references to the fat knight up until the end of the eighteenth century than to any other literary character, and, before the last half-century, discussions of Falstaff […] dominated criticism of the play'.[16] If it can be argued that *Hamlet* is Shakespeare's most famous play (and the titular prince his most famous character), then perhaps Falstaff can be seen, as Augustus Schlegel describes him, as the 'crown of Shakespeare's comic invention',[17] despite not appearing in a traditional comedy. William Hazlitt, poking just a little fun at Falstaff, refers to him as 'perhaps the most substantial comic character that ever was invented',[18] one who, even if he wanted to, he 'could not get over'.[19] However, Hazlitt also notes that, in Shakespeare's works, 'the spirit of humanity and the fancy of the poet greatly prevail over the mere wit and satire, and that we sympathise with his characters oftener than we laugh at them'.[20] Though, in this instance, Hazlitt may be talking about the wider repertoire of Shakespearean characters, his comment is still just as pertinent to Falstaff in particular.

This thought allows us to return to the chapter on Malvolio, a character who embodies the duality of sympathy and laughter. Initially, however, Falstaff is not so easily comparable to Malvolio, having more in common with *Twelfth Night*'s very own Lord of

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[14] Kastan, 'Introduction', p. 62.
[15] Kastan, 'Introduction', p. 62.
[16] Kastan, 'Introduction', p. 3.
[17] Augustus William Schlegel, *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, trans. by John Black (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1846), p. 426. Google ebook.
[18] William Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, ed. by J. H. Lobban (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 144. Cambridge ebook.
[19] William Hazlitt, 'On Shakespeare and Ben Jonson', in *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* (London: Taylor and Hessey, 1819), p. 57. Archive.org ebook.
[20] Hazlitt, 'On Shakespeare and Ben Jonson', p. 58.

Misrule, Sir Toby Belch. In discussing *Twelfth Night*, Phillip Stubbes' comments on the Lord of Misrule tradition, coming at the end of the sixteenth century, return to relevance when discussing Falstaff:

> They have also certain papers, wherin is painted some babblerie or other, of Imagery work, and these they call my Lord of mis-rules badges, these they give to every one, that wil give money for them, to maintaine them in their heathenrie, divelrie, whordome, drunkennes, pride, and what not. And who will not be buxom to them, and give them money for their devilish cognizances, they are mocked, and flouted at, not a little.[21]

In *Twelfth Night*, as we have already seen, such a description can be applied to Sir Toby Belch and his co-conspirators, who, from the perspective of Malvolio and his goal of marrying his mistress Olivia, are antagonists. Though we may not at first find their lust for partying disagreeable, it is their prolonged and extreme – indeed, exclusive – campaign against Malvolio which, in part, inspires our 'adhesive' reaction towards the steward, encouraging our sympathies towards him to overwhelm any antipathy we may have previously felt towards him or any solidarity we might offer to Sir Toby Belch, Feste, and co.

Stubbes' description, though accurate enough for Sir Toby Belch, surely conjures images of Falstaff. The knight capably fulfils 'heathenrie, divelrie, whordome, drunkennes, pride', and it is clear that anybody can be a target for mockery, even those among their own number, and even Hal. In the opening act of *Henry IV Part 2*, when the Chief Justice attempts to hail Falstaff to discuss a robbery at Gad's Hill, the knight pretends to be deaf, instead talking about the 'whoreson apoplexy' (I. 2. 109) affecting the current King Henry IV. He then goes to great pains to convince the Chief Justice that he is a young man, 'born about three of the clock in the afternoon, with a white head and something a round belly […] I am only old in judgement and understanding' (I. 2. 187-92), and not 'blasted with antiquity' (I. 2. 185) as the Justice sees him.

There is something uniquely Falstaffian about this particular flavour of wordplay. Though Sir Toby does have the aptitude to help to plan and then to enact the plot to fool

[21] Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1973), page headings: 'The order of the L. of misrule' & 'The L. of misrules cognisance'.

Malvolio 'black and blue' (II. 5. 8-9),[22] he is very much in charge of a joint venture, with Maria undertaking the letter writing and necessary dialogues with Olivia, and Feste acting out the part of Sir Topas during the play's infamous dark room scene. Perhaps most telling, however, is the fact that Sir Toby expresses feelings of culpability for his actions. Before leaving Malvolio with 'Sir Topas', Sir Toby remarks:

> I would we were well rid of this knavery. If he may be conveniently delivered, I would he were, for I am now so far in offence with my niece that I cannot pursue with any safety this sport to the upshot. (IV. 2. 54-7)

Regret, on the other hand, is a word that is not in Falstaff's grandiose vocabulary – at least, not yet. In *Henry IV Part 1*, after Falstaff has spun the tale of defeating an ever-increasing band of brigands, Hal reveals that it was he who robbed Falstaff, thus eviscerating Falstaff's story. Here the prince challenges Falstaff to regret, asking him 'What trick, what device, what starting-hole canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?' (II. 4. 255). Of course, this being Falstaff, he has an immediate response:

> By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye. Why, hear you, my masters: was it for me to kill the heir apparent? Should I turn upon the true prince? Why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules, but beware instinct. The lion will not touch the true prince; instinct is a great matter. I was now a coward on instinct. I shall think the better of myself, and thee, during my life – I for a valiant lion and thou for a true prince. But, by the Lord, lads, I am glad you have the money. (II. 4. 259-67)

Hal does not believe the explanation, suggesting that they should all watch a play about Falstaff 'running away' (II. 4. 272-3), but belief is never the point of the rogue's wordplay. He simply must absolve himself of blame, despite the evidence suggesting the contrary, and dig himself out of this hole, so that he may gleefully and wilfully throw himself into another one. For Falstaff, the conclusion is never the point; it is with the sport, the chicanery, that the fun lies.

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[22] William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night; or, What You Will*, ed. by Elizabeth Story Donno (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). All further references to *Twelfth Night* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.

When Falstaff tells the Chief Justice in *Henry IV Part 2* that he is not in fact 'blasted with antiquity' (I. 2. 185), he is not truly trying to convince him. Such dancing wordplay is meant to distract from the original point, or to wear out the target, forcing him to acquiesce or go away entirely. Though seemingly harmless when deployed by Falstaff, this tactic of twisting and reducing the true meaning of words to escape trouble sets a dangerous precedent. Falstaff's actions are a hair's breadth away from the very similar actions of Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, who grinds Katherina down into admitting that the sun is the moon, and an 'old, wrinkled, faded, withered' (IV. 5. 43) man is a 'Young budding virgin, fair and fresh and sweet' (IV. 5. 37),[23] and of Feste's torment of Malvolio in the dark room scene of *Twelfth Night*. Though it may be debated whether Katherina or Malvolio are ever truly broken by verbal barrage, their intention remains the same – they use confusion and wordplay to encourage obedience, lest the torment continue.

Falstaff's companions are not immune from this kind of treatment, and, through them, we can see just how far Falstaff is willing to go to protect, or further, himself using wordplay. When, in *Henry IV Part 1*, he is appealing to Hal to replace 'Three or four bonds of forty pound apiece and a seal ring of my grandfather's' (III. 3. 101-3), which he claims was stolen from him in Mistress Quickly's inn, his valuation is disputed, causing him to remark of Quickly that there is no more faith in her than in a 'stewed prune' (III. 3. 112-2), and that she is a 'beast' (III. 3. 121) for suggesting he lost very little. When Falstaff has summoned men to follow him into battle in *Part 1*, Hal's assessment of their quality is telling enough to gauge the kind of company the knight keeps, remarking that he did 'never see such pitiful rascals' (IV. 2. 63). More telling, however, is how Falstaff chooses to refer to them, as 'good enough to toss; food for powder […] They'll fill a pit as well as better. Tush, man, mortal men' (IV. 2. 64-6): to him, at least when he is in the presence of Hal, these men are nothing more than cannon fodder. During Act V, mid-battle, Falstaff appears alone, but continues to belittle his troops, recalling how he led them 'where they are peppered' (V. 3. 36), and those that remain alive are fit only for the 'town's end to beg during life' (V. 3. 38). Though it cannot be known whether Falstaff lost so many men due to incompetence or because of a deliberate choice, his survival entirely unharmed hints at the latter. John Smythe's *Certain*

[23] William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. by Ann Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). All further references to *The Taming of the Shrew* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.

Discourses, published in 1590, comments on the existence of such leaders, whose 'discipline is such a mockerie, and so contrarie to all order Militarie, as that such are not to bee accoumpted worthie to take the charge of men, nor yet to bee reckoned amongst the number of soldiers'.[24] Smythe notes that such leaders can often be rewarded monetarily for their cowardly actions:

> Even so contrariwise, the new discipline of some of our men of warre in the Lowe Countries, hath been, to send, and employe their soldiers into manie daungerous and vaine exploites and services, without any reason Militarie, having sure regard to their owne safeties; as though they desired and hoped to have more gaine and profite by the dead paies of their soldiers slaine, than increase of reputation by the atchieving and prevailing in anie such enterprises.[25]

There is no evidence that Falstaff led his men into dangerous battles with an ulterior motive, but, following his hasty exit after Hal robbed him at Gad's Hill, this would not be the first time, nor the last, when his cowardice and desire to stay alive at all costs overwhelms his other faculties. By denouncing those he led to death, he raises his own value as a knight: he survives because he is greater in valour (that is, his warped definition of valour) and skill than his band of 'pitiful rascals'.

As with previous chapters, part of Falstaff's 'adhesiveness' comes from the sense of 'humanity' emanating from him, something which the audience finds amiable and, most importantly, forgivable, despite other negative traits. Harold Bloom recognises this phenomenon, and insists that 'Falstaff is a person, while Hal and Hotspur are fictions',[26] placing them in direct competition, and floating the idea that Falstaff's flaws are 'fun', whereas the king's make him a killjoy. In a moment of eerie omniscience, Falstaff foreshadows the 'humanity' that he will become best known for in the final act of *Henry IV Part 1*. When he returns from the 'dead' after faking his own death, he gives a short metatheatrical soliloquy on the nature of lying:

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[24] John Smythe, *Certain Discourses: Concerning the formes and effects of divers sorts of weapons, and other verie important matters Militarie, greatlie mistaken by divers of our men of warre in these daies* (London: Richard Johnes, 1590), fol. 9r, *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://liverpool.idm.oclc.org/login?url?url=https://www.proquest.com/books/certain-discourses-vvritten-sir-iohn-smythe/docview/2240885650/se-2?accountid=12117> [accessed 15th October 2021].
[25] John Smythe, *Certain Discourses*, fol. 9r.
[26] Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1998), p. 279.

> Counterfeit? I lie; I am no counterfeit. To die is to be a counterfeit, for he is but the counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man. But to counterfeit dying when a man thereby liveth is to be no counterfeit but the true and perfect image of life indeed. The better part of valour is discretion, in the which better part I have saved my life. (V. 4. 114-20)

Not only does Shakespeare use Falstaff to draw attention to the duplicitous nature of acting, but he has the knight invert cowardice into a virtue, something which is a constituent part of valour and therefore should be adopted by other men. The art of Falstaff's misrule logic is that it not only informs how he lives his own life, but instructs others how to copy him, so that they may be as 'virtuous' as he is. When Hal returns and sees his friend alive and well, he asks:

> Art thou alive, or is it fantasy
> That plays upon our eyesight? I prithee speak;
> We will not trust our eyes without our ears.
> Thou art not what thou seem'st. (V. 4. 134-7)

Falstaff responds, 'No, that's certain: I am not a double man' (V. 4. 138), and, later, 'Didst thou? Lord, Lord, how this world is given to lying!' (V. 4. 145).

Falstaff places the responsibility of disproving his 'humanity' on everybody around him, by claiming that he is 'the true and perfect image of life', and that all the other characters are 'counterfeit'. If Falstaff's afterlife is determined by the critical writings and adaptations surrounding him, then the character himself prolongs that interest by fuelling the idea that he possesses 'humanity' beyond all other characters. His flaws are no longer flaws, but mere examples of the depth of his creation: every negative, every petty crime, can be viewed through the lens of a realistic character with 'humanity'. As Kastan notes, he 'seems to have a character rather than merely to be one'.[27]

Of course, it is important to pull back for a moment and ensure that one does not get sucked into the same phenomenon that so affects Bloom. Falstaff is no more of a person than Hal or Hotspur, and his affability can only shade his flaws, not cover them entirely. Falstaff's greatest lie, it seems, is that which convinces an audience that he is real, and not at the beck and call of Shakespeare's pen. And so, despite how effective this perceived

[27] Kastan, 'Introduction', p. 44.

'humanity' has been at creating such a lasting critical afterlife for the character, a measure of 'adhesiveness' clearly takes more than just a realistic depiction. As with the previous chapters, some sort of 'unequal contest',[28] as Charles Lamb describes it, must push, with unnecessary force, against Falstaff's fundamental desires, and allow the regular admiration of his 'humanity' to transform into sympathy for his final moments.

Arguably the most fundamental similarity that binds all these chapters together is the process of forced conversion. On the least extreme end of the scale, Malvolio and Katherina are asked to transform themselves, and, though the results range from Katherina's questionable submission to abject failure following Malvolio's sartorial transformation, some level of conformity is the intended goal. For Shylock and Caliban, the forced conversion is not only more literal, but perhaps more spiritually harmful or universally unpalatable. Shylock is ordered by the court to give up his worldly possessions and renounce his faith, by becoming a Christian, while Caliban, confronted with magical powers he cannot entirely comprehend, is forced to give up his own faith, that of 'savagery', and convert to 'civility'. Though audiences may question the sincerity of Katherina or Caliban's conversions, or feel unsettled by the absences of Malvolio and Shylock, in the worlds of these plays, at least, the forced transformation or conversion is sufficient enough for the obstacle to be removed, allowing the festive atmosphere to resume, whether the audience agrees or not.

For the 'problem' of Falstaff, who not only perfectly encapsulates Sir Toby Belch's festive world of 'cakes and ale' (II. 3. 98), but adds to it debauchery and petty crime, forced conversion must also be the solution for the reconstitution of a more serious energy demanded by the progress of the Henry plays, and of Hal himself. Despite this, a forced conversion does not, and perhaps cannot, occur, and, most strikingly of all, it is never really offered to Falstaff as a genuine way back into the world from which he is banished at the close of *Part 2*.

At the close of *Henry IV Part 2*, Hal, emboldened by his recent ascension to the throne of England, is met by his former friend Falstaff outside Westminster Abbey. What follows is Hal's complete rejection of Falstaff, where he is given the sentence that he must never attempt to meet with him again, 'on pain of death' (V. 5. 62), nor to come within 'ten mile'

[28] Charles Lamb, 'On Some of the Old Actors', in *The Essays of Elia* (London: Methuen, 1920), 223-238 (pp. 227-231).

(V. 5. 64) of the new king. Hal's now (in)famous address to Falstaff, uninterrupted for twenty-five lines, is unequivocal in its intent. He opens the speech with 'I know thee not, old man' (V. 5. 46) and dismisses all their previous encounters as a dream, 'I have long dreamt of such a kind of man,/So surfeit-swelled, so old and so profane' (V. 5. 48-9), before dismissing even this, 'But being awaked, I do despise my dream.' (V. 5. 50). Hal the Prince has been replaced – indeed, converted/transformed – into Henry the King. Perhaps anticipating Falstaff's attempt to respond with a joke, Henry soon follows this up with a warning:

> Reply not to me with a fool-born jest.
> Presume not that I am the thing I was,
> For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,
> That I have turned away from my former self (V. 5. 54-7)

With these lines, Henry successfully demonstrates how astute he can be by cutting off what he sees as the likelihood of a witty retort. However, true to the previous explorations of 'adhesiveness', this moment constitutes one part of a larger, much more personalised attack upon Falstaff. Where Malvolio the killjoy is driven out by laughter, and Shylock the Jew is removed by converting him to Christianity, Falstaff the jolly knight is prevented from delivering a trademark quip which may have previously got him out of trouble: silenced, he becomes powerless – indeed, no longer Falstaff.

As Henry's address turns to both Falstaff and his followers, the king promises that 'as we hear you do reform yourselves,/We will, according to your strengths and qualities,/Give you advancement' (V. 5. 67-9). Here we have the offer of conversion, to become part of the world of *Henry V*: one without, it seems, cakes and ale. Falstaff's options are extremely limited at this point. He may either 'Fall to thy prayers' (V. 5. 46) and 'Leave gormandizing' (V. 5. 52), or, the alternative, be exiled from the king's favour and presence, which may be so unpalatable that it is no alternative at all, forcing him to convert to maintain a semblance of his current lifestyle as Henry's companion. However, how can Falstaff achieve such a transformation, even if he wanted to accept the offer? Falstaff is the embodiment of everything Henry is asking him to give up, and the natural opposition to everything Henry has come to represent. Like Malvolio, it is impossible for Falstaff to accept the invitation of conversion, for 'he has no capacity to be other than what he is, nor would

an audience wish him to be. For him, Harry's offer is moot'.[29] This is the impossible situation which Falstaff finds himself in at the close of *Henry IV Part 2*. Here he is facing a 'final confrontation with his much-needed, long-promised, and oft-avoided' repentance, a 'command' from the new King Henry V which, as Michael Davies puts it, cannot be 'laughed away, side-stepped, or postponed any longer'[30] – it is an absolute necessity, but one which cannot be achieved.

Falstaff is, understandably, crestfallen. Once the king has left the stage, he attempts to assure his followers (and himself) that there is nothing to worry about, that he shall be 'sent for in private to him' (V. 5. 86), and that Henry 'must seem thus to the world' (V. 5. 87) to keep up appearances. Shallow, one of Falstaff's followers, questions his leader's assertions, telling him that he cannot 'perceive' (V. 5. 80) how he can still be made great by staying in his company, and, uncharacteristically, it seems that Falstaff cannot convince him otherwise. As Michael Hattaway put it in his 2007 essay, Shallow can see what Falstaff's promises really are in this moment, 'the brave shows and excesses of rhetoric that wrap or re-fashion the bare ribs of truth.'[31] As Shallow witnesses his leader's true interiority for the first time, it is clear that Falstaff has been mortally wounded – perhaps Death really has struck 'so fat a deer' (V. 4. 106) this time.

Wild Falstaff

With no way back into the world he once dominated, we are left to imagine a Falstaff roaming the wilderness. Though he remains where he started, without Henry the landscape is desolate, and there is no way out. This is in contrast with Henry, who not only left the wilderness and his 'underground' life, but who seems certain never to return, having killed it within him. In the opening scene of *Henry V*, the Bishops of Canterbury and Ely discuss the new king's sudden transformation:

> CANTERBURY. The king is full of grace, and fair regard.
> ELY. And a true lover of the holy Church.
> CANTERBURY. The courses of his youth promised it not.

[29] James C. Bulman, 'footnote '67-9 The King's Promise'', *King Henry IV Part 2*, ed by. James C. Bulman (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2016).
[30] Michael Davies, 'Falstaff's Lateness: Calvinism and the Protestant Hero in *Henry IV*', *The Review of English Studies*, 56 (2005), 351-78, p. 357.
[31] Michael Hattaway, 'Superfluous Falstaff: Morality and Structure', in *Shakespeare et l'excès*, ed. by Pierre Kapitaniak and Jean-Michel Déprats (Paris: Société Française Shakespeare, 2007), 75-87, p. 75-6.

> The breath no sooner left his father's body
> But that his wildness, mortified in him,
> Seemed to die too. Yea, at that very moment
> Consideration like an angel came,
> And whipped th'offending Adam out of him,
> Leaving his body as a paradise
> T'envelop and contain celestial spirits.
> Never was such a sudden scholar made,
> Never came reformation in a flood
> With such a heady currance scouring faults,
> Nor never Hydra-headed wilfulness
> So soon did lose his seat, and all at once,
> As in this king.
> ELY. We are blessed in the change. (I. 1. 22-37)[32]

The bishops describe Henry's 'wildness', his time in the wilderness, as being a 'course'. However, rather than focusing on the question of whether the prince chose, or was led to, this path, it seems more relevant when discussing Falstaff to concentrate on the most striking part of this description – that the prince had a 'course' at all.

Samuel Johnson's dictionary of 1755 describes what it means to 'bewilder', 'To lose in pathless places; to confound for want of a plain road'.[33] Of course, Henry, being of royal blood, was able to transcend such definitions. Not only could he find a path through the wilderness, but the Bishop of Ely believes he was residing there deliberately, masking his innate grandeur:

> The strawberry grows underneath the nettle,
> And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best
> Neighboured by fruit of baser quality.
> And so the prince obscured his contemplation
> Under the veil of wildness, which, no doubt,
> Grew like the summer grass fastest by night,
> Unseen, yet crescive in his faculty. (I. 1. 60-6)

Henry's soliloquy in *Part 1* certainly suggests as much:

> So when this loose behaviour I throw off
> And pay the debt I never promised,
> By how much better than my word I am,

[32] William Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, ed by. Andrew Gurr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). All further references to *King Henry V* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.
[33] Samuel Johnson, 'bewilder', *A Dictionary of the English Language, 1755* [online], accessible at: <https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/1755page/between?zoom=1600> [accessed 22nd October 2021].

> By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;
> And, like bright metal on a sullen ground,
> My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,
> Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes
> Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
> I'll so offend to make offence a skill,
> Redeeming time when men think least I will. (I. 2. 198-207)

By describing the prince's 'wildness' as a 'veil', the Bishop paints the image of Henry as a master manipulator of his surroundings. He can simply 'wear' the guise of bewilderment and discard it any time. There was no need for Henry to forge a path out of his 'wasted years' and toward righteousness because he was never truly lost; he was never 'bewildered'. It is ironic, then, that, later in *Part 1*, Hal should question Falstaff's honesty by remarking 'Thou art not what thou seem'st' (V. 4. 137), when the prince seems to shift so easily between different personalities or personas.

Unfortunately, Falstaff has no such power. When the knight is stunned to silence during his banishment at the close of *Henry IV Part 2*, 'bewildered' in the sense that he has been confused and perplexed,[34] he is dumped back into the wilderness, exiled though 'arrested', this time thoroughly 'bewildered' in Johnson's sense of the word. Falstaff, of course, had always thrived in a sort of 'wasteland' – literally, a land of 'waste', of excess. Having access to everything he wanted, and, though he was still 'bewildered' in the sense that there was no 'plain road' with which he could leave, he never felt the need to seek a way out. Happily, he occupied the positions of 'bewildered' and 'bewilderer', the lord of the wilderness. On this occasion, however, after he has been banished, Falstaff has been given instructions by the new king: 'Fall to thy prayers' (V. 5. 46) and 'Leave gormandizing' (V. 5. 52), with the reward being that when the king does 'hear you do reform yourselves,/We will, according to your strengths and qualities,/Give you advancement' (V. 5. 67-9). The knight is shown the path out of the wilderness, but it is no 'plain road'. Such is his impossible predicament: the route may as well not exist, rendering the wilderness a 'pathless place'. Falstaff must lose something of himself, of his very being, to no longer become/remain lost – both in the sense of being exiled from Henry's train, and of being morally damned.

[34] 'bewilder', Oxford English Dictionary [online], accessible at: <https://www-oed-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/18465?rskey=wAoaVp&result=1#eid> [accessed 22nd October 2021].

Perhaps all is not lost for Falstaff. During the Epilogue to *Henry IV Part 2*, the speaker tells us plainly, 'If you be not too much cloyed with fat meat [Falstaff], our humble author will continue the story with Sir John in it' (Epilogue. 26-8). To continue the story of Falstaff beyond the key 'adhesive' moment at the end of *Henry IV Part 2* would be a completely unprecedented move, even more remarkable than John Fletcher's unofficial sequel to *The Taming of the Shrew* written within Shakespeare's own lifetime. Such a follow-up would promise to address the issues we have about the nature of Falstaff's dismissal, and, depending on how those issues are handled, complete the loop of his 'adhesiveness' by providing him with a 'good' ending. If Falstaff *must* be removed for Hal to become King Henry V, did he have to reject him so brutally, so personally? Is it likely, even possible, for Falstaff to accept the invitation to conform? If not, does this moment mark the death of the character, symbolically then physically? How can Falstaff survive, and what does this look like? Sadly, for those who wanted a happy ending for Falstaff, he does not make an appearance in *Henry V*, having been relegated to the position of an off-stage character. The speaker of the Epilogue, and perhaps Shakespeare himself, reneges on the promise of there being more Falstaff in this chronology.

The first time the knight is mentioned in *Henry V* is when Mistress Quickly tells Nym, Pistol, and Bardolph that he is gravely ill, 'shaked of a burning quotidian tertian that it is most lamentable to behold' (II. 1. 94-5). Their response is not dissimilar to the reaction of those retelling the fate of Actaeon in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, as explored in the earlier discussion on Malvolio:

> NYM. The king hath run bad humours on the knight; that's the even of it.
> PISTOL. Nym, thou hast spoke the right, his heart is fracted and corroborate.
> NYM. The king is a good king, but it must be as it may. He passes some humours and careers. (II. 1. 97-102)

> Much muttring was upon this fact. Some thought there was extended
> A great deale more extremitie than neded. Some commended
> Dianas doing: saying that is was but worthely
> For safegarde of hir womanhood. Eche partie did applie

Good reasons to defende their case.[35]

Though there is not so much of a debate to be had between Falstaff's companions, with the general agreement being that his banishment had to be done, it does not prevent Nym and Pistol from agreeing that the king's actions were 'bad humours', which may now have resulted in the knight's poor health. Taken at face value, 'humours', as relating to the belief in humoral medicine practises, ie. the four humors, suggests that the King has made Falstaff ill by his actions. However, Johnson cites a further definition of 'humour', 'a trick; a practice',[36] hinting at the belief that Falstaff's sentence was deliberately unachievable, a punishment masquerading as a choice. The scene ends with Pistol encouraging his friends to go and comfort Falstaff, before calling them 'lambkins' (II. 1. 103). Referring to them with this 'term of endearment'[37] emphasises their better health, or younger age, when compared to Falstaff, but also suggests their position of inferiority, perhaps to King Henry V, their shepherd. Another possibility emerges, however, when this term's only other appearance in Shakespeare's oeuvre is considered. Once more, it comes from Pistol, in *Henry IV Part 2*, when he rushes to tell Falstaff that Hal has become the new king, 'Sir John, thy tender lambkin now is King' (V. 3. 116). In this instance, Falstaff is the shepherd, even to the new king of England, demonstrating not only the perceived level of authority the knight had then, but how fondly he thought of his 'lambkin', the young prince.

The next time Falstaff is mentioned, he is dead. Still believing in his fundamental goodness, Mistress Quickly declares 'Nay, sure, he's not in hell. He's in Arthur's bosom if ever man went to Arthur's bosom' (II. 3. 8-9), directly referencing Falstaff's former position as a knight, once of King Henry, now of King Arthur – Falstaff, in death, has ascended into the ranks of the legendary Knights of the Round Table. The suggestion that Henry is directly responsible for Falstaff's death is stated more flatly by Llewellyn, who compares the king to Alexander the Great, who 'in his rages and his furies and his wraths […] [did] kill his best friend Cleitus' (IV. 7. 27-31). When Gower attempts to interject and claim '[the King] never killed any of his friends' (IV. 7. 32-3), Llewellyn finishes his story, backtracking slightly,

[35] Ovid, 'The. xv. Bookes of P. Ovidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis', trans. by Arthur Golding (London: Willyam Seres, 1567), fol. 34r, *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://search-proquest-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/docview/2240861651?accountid=12117> [accessed 22nd October 2021].
[36] Samuel Johnson, 'humour', *A Dictionary of the English Language, 1755* [online], accessible at: <https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/views/search.php?term=humour> [accessed 27th February 2023].
[37] 'lambkin', Oxford English Dictionary [online], accessible at: <https://www-oed-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/105247?redirectedFrom=lambkin#eid> [accessed 22nd October 2021].

claiming that Henry 'being in his right wits and his good judgements, turned away the fat knight with the great belly doublet' (IV. 7. 38-9), who Gower clarifies is 'Sir John Falstaff' (IV. 7. 41). Though Llewellyn makes an attempt to compare Henry favourably with Alexander, and Gower claims that the King never killed any of his friends, thus denying that the young prince was ever amiable with Falstaff, the connection between Alexander killing Cleitus and Henry 'killing' Falstaff has been made. This comes not long after the revelation that both Bardolph and Nym, the king's former companions, have been hanged for stealing during wartime, with the king's reaction to the former's death being entirely matter of fact:

> We would have all such offenders so cut off, and we give express charge that in our marches through the country there be nothing compelled from the villages, nothing taken but paid for, none of the French upbraided or abused in disdainful language. For when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler gamester is the soonest winner. (III. 7. 92-7)

Looking at the wider picture of the complete Henriad, there is nothing too shocking about Henry's statement. Though it seems like quite a harsh expression towards a former friend, the new king pairs this with the desire to act honourably towards the French. His authority has transcended looking out for a few tavern companions – he has whole countries to shepherd. Though we may enjoy Falstaff more than we do other characters, and we may see something human, something of ourselves, in him, the Henriad is, after all, the story of King Henry V. The prodigal son returns from the wilderness, proves his worth, and unifies the thrones of England and France. In this context, it is only natural that Falstaff and his followers are relegated to the side-lines: there is no room for them in this new world. Despite this, Falstaff stays with us, from beyond the grave, as it were: he adheres.

In the previous chapters, what would follow at this point would be the discussion of a number of adaptations, each attempting to explain, understand, or reconfigure Falstaff's position in the world of the Henriad, as part of the 'adhesive' process. Shakespeare clearly understood the draw of Falstaff, promising the audience more of him at the close of *Henry IV Part 2*, but, by reneging on this promise and having him die off-stage, the audience gets neither the happy ending they wish for him, either through his reformation or his triumphant return, nor the chance to say goodbye. Much like with Shylock's absence in Act

V of *The Merchant of Venice*, we need more of Falstaff to make sense of his dismissal, to understand why Henry seemed to be so unnecessarily cruel towards him.

Nevertheless, as always seems the case with the all-encompassing Falstaff, the story does not end there. Although Shakespeare does not complete the 'adhesive' loop in *Henry V*, in the sense that we still notice his absence and desire more answers, the fat knight is brought back to life in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. This play, a departure from the chronologically bound Henriad, was likely composed sometime between *Henry IV Part 1* and *Henry V*, though we can only say for sure that it is later than the former. David Crane, editor of the 1997 Cambridge edition of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, subscribes to the 'standard' view that the play was written between the two 'bracketing plays […] either before, during or after the writing of *Henry IV Part Two*',[38] specifically 'between the writing of Act 3 and Act 4'.[39] This date, likely to be in early 1597, is supported by allusions within the play to the annual feast of the Order of the Garter, which would have taken place before Queen Elizabeth I. Crane notes that this may also be the origin of the popular story that the Queen commanded Shakespeare to write a play about Falstaff in love, an idea which was first perpetuated by John Dennis and Nicholas Rowe in the early eighteenth century.[40] Indeed, the earliest publication of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the 1602 quarto edition, states on its title page, 'As it hath bene divers times Acted by the right Honorable my Lord Chamberlaines servants. Both before her Majestie, and else-where'.[41]

However, faced with an absence of, as Barbara Freedman puts it, 'any record of any play performed at these ceremonies',[42] and the simple fact that the Falstaff presented to us in *Merry Wives* is not in love, thus disobeying the Queen's supposed command, the standard chronology is uncertain. Freedman's preferred date of composition is early 1598, after *Henry*

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[38] David Crane, 'Introduction', in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ed. David Crane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 4.
[39] Crane, 'Introduction', p. 5.
[40] John Dennis, *The Comical Gallant: or the Amours of Sir John Falstaffe* (London: A. Baldwin, 1702), p. 2, *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, accessible at: <https://go-gale-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/ps/i.do?p=ECCO&u=livuni&id=GALE|CB0130670138&v=2.1&it=r> [accessed 3rd November 2021]. Nicholas Rowe, *The Works of William Shakespear; in Six Volumes* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1709), I, pp. viii-xi, *Archive.org*, accessible at: <https://archive.org/details/worksofmrwilliam01shak/page/n1/mode/2up> [accessed 3rd November 2021].
[41] William Shakespeare, *A Most plesaunt and excellent conceited Comedie, of Syr John Falstaffe, and the merrie Wives of Windsor* (London: T. C., 1602), *Early English Books Online*, accessed at: <https://www.proquest.com/eebo/docview/2248527009/99846602/726448D8D478407BPQ/26?accountid=12117> [accessed 3rd November 2021].
[42] Barbara Freedman, 'Shakespearean Chronology, Ideological Complicity, and Floating Text: Something is Rotten in Windsor', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 45: 2 (1994), 190-210, p. 197.

IV Part 2, thus exposing the tantalising possibility that the Epilogue of that play, promising us a return to Falstaff, is indeed fulfilled by *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, before the character is killed off rather less anti-climactically, and without so much of the weight of expectation, in *Henry V*. Whether *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was written by royal command or not, its very existence implies not only that Shakespeare was aware of the popularity of this one particular character, but what it was about him that was so appealing, what about him that created an 'adhesive' reaction. Regardless of whether the play was written before, during, or after *Henry IV Part 2*, an effort is made to remove Falstaff from the more serious atmosphere both of that play and of the play to follow, *Henry V*, perhaps to take the sting out of his dismissal, and to put him into a new world of low stakes trickery and wordplay where he can relax and, indeed, retire.

Unfortunately, there is a potential problem with the theory that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* will complete the 'adhesive' loop by providing us with more Falstaff: here features a slightly different Falstaff. That is not to say that there are two characters in Shakespeare's oeuvre named Falstaff, but that there is something a little less – something diminished – in this version of the fat knight than the one we are given in the Henriad. William Hazlitt, quoting from *Hamlet*, dislikes Falstaff's turn (both dramatic and transformative) in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, remarking that, 'His re-appearance in the Merry Wives of Windsor is not "a consummation devoutly to be wished," for we do not take pleasure in the repeated triumphs over him'.[43] Augustus Schlegel takes similar issue with these repeated triumphs, 'That Falstaff should fall so repeatedly into the snare gives us a less favourable opinion of his shrewdness than the foregoing pieces had led us to form'.[44] How can it be that Shakespeare brought back a character so beloved, and so well understood by his creator, and yet be unsuccessful in recapturing that same vitality?

Anne Barton summarises the general reception towards the play in her essay 'Falstaff and the comic community':

> For a long time now, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* has seemed to exist uncomfortably apart from the rest of Shakespeare's comedies. […] The situation is made worse by a feeling that, irrespective of whether Shakespeare wrote *The Merry Wives of*

[43] Hazlitt, 'On Shakespeare and Ben Jonson', p. 58.
[44] Schlegel, *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, p. 427.

> *Windsor* before, during, or after *2 Henry IV*, the comedy itself constitutes a betrayal of Falstaff even worse than the one inflicted by Henry V. […] [Henry] had, as we have come to accept, no real choice. It is harder to explain why Shakespeare should have attacked his own great comic creation, quite gratuitously, by allowing Falstaff to be humiliated at the hands of an unremarkable, small-town society: deceived by housewives, mocked and tormented by children, and outwitted for all his linguistic dexterity, by men who make 'fritters of English'.[45]

As though this damning review was not enough, a little over a page later, Barton returns to describe the play as a 'painful confrontation between an immemorial kind of comic hero and his own form of comedy'.[46] This sort of visceral reaction to what should be the triumphant return of a comic great, to be pained by his 'performance', is certainly indicative of an 'adhesive' attachment to the character as we see him in the Henriad. However, whereas the onus for continuing, or adapting, a character's story usually falls on others, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* sees Shakespeare uniquely undertaking the task himself.

It is true that Falstaff finds himself being tricked multiple times by housewives, and even ends up being humiliated before the entire town. The first trick is to encourage Falstaff to hide in a basket of clothes, only to be 'thrown in the Thames' (III. 5. 5).[47] The fat knight believes he has wised up to such games, refusing to 'come no more i'th'basket' (IV. 2. 37), but agreeing to disguise himself as 'the fat woman of Brentford' (IV. 2. 60). However, one of the progenitors of this scheme, Mistress Ford, is fully aware that such a disguise will rile her jealous husband, who 'hath threatened to beat her' (IV. 2. 71). Mistress Page, her accomplice, sees only the good in this circumstance, wishing that 'Heaven guide him to thy husband's cudgel, and the devil guide his cudgel afterwards!' (IV. 2. 72-3). After Mistress Ford's husband beats the disguised Falstaff out of his house, the two women confide in their husbands about their tricks and encourage them to join in for one last game. Evans, a parson, expresses doubt about Falstaff's willingness at this point, surely echoing audience sentiment:

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[45] Anne Barton, 'Falstaff and the comic community', in *Essays, Mainly Shakespearean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 70-90, p. 70. Archive.org ebook.
[46] Barton, 'Falstaff and the comic community', p. 72.
[47] William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ed by. David Crane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). All further references to *The Merry Wives of Windsor* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.

> You say he has been thrown in the rivers, and has been grievously peaten as an old 'oman. Methinks there should be terrors in him, that he should not come. Methinks his flesh is punished; he shall have no desires. (IV. 4. 18-21)

Regardless, the housewives convince Falstaff to dress up as Herne the hunter, wearing upon his head the horns of a stag. Soon after, the townsfolk ambush him as 'fairies', stealing away the housewives and embarrassing him. When these tricks are finally revealed, Falstaff laments that he has 'lived to stand at the taunt of one that makes fritters of English' (V. 5. 129-30), a defeat at the hands of an inferior wordsmith. The fat knight not only reflects on the state of his life, but on the state of this character. According to critical consensus, by extending Falstaff's life with *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the character has lived for too long, so long that even the common man has begun to mock him.

The situation is not anywhere as bad as Barton suggests, however, when she refers to the play as 'painful', or when Hazlitt and Schlegel bemoan the existence of the housewives' 'repeated triumphs'. Falstaff is, of course, also tricked in *Henry IV Part 1*, when Hal, in disguise, robs the fat knight during his own attempt at robbery. When the two reunite, Falstaff tells the prince that he was set upon by 'a hundred' (II. 4. 155) men, with the numbers of enemies he claims to have personally dispatched rising with each line, 'Two I am sure I have paid […] Four rogues in buckram let drive at me […] but took all their seven points in my target, thus […] These nine in buckram that I told thee of […] seven of the eleven I paid' (II. 4. 185-211). Hal reveals it was he who robbed Falstaff, and, as previously quoted, the fat knight claims that he knew this all long, explaining, 'By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye' (II. 4. 259).

Though there is a great difference in being tricked by the heir to the throne and a group of housewives, there is no use in pretending that the Falstaff of the Henriad is anything more than a braggart, albeit one with sharp wit. His invincibility when Hal confronts him regarding the robbery remains present during *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, as the housewives' tricks bounce harmlessly off his rotund exterior. When he is thrown into the Thames, he is saved by the river's 'shelvy and shallow' (III. 5. 11-2) shore, and, though he was beaten 'into all the colours of the rainbow' (IV. 5. 91) during the second trick, his 'admirable dexterity of wit' and 'counterfeiting the action of an old woman' (IV. 5. 92-3)

allows him to escape. At the close of the play, when Falstaff has been ambushed by the whole town, Mistress Page offers reconciliation:

> Good husband, let us every one go home,
> And laugh this sport o'er by a country fire,
> Sir John and all. (V. 5. 212-4)

True to form, Falstaff survives his ordeal in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and even gets invited inside the house he was earlier expelled from – a far cry from the fates of all of our other 'adhesive' characters, who are either kicked out or forced inside. As David Crane puts it:

> Falstaff is finally unsinkable. […] *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is not a play about Falstaff's discomfiture, much less his conversion; rather it is about his invincibility, beginning with the easy rebuttal of Shallow and Slender and continuing through a series of resurrections, of resurfacings, which set at nought all that standard middle-class morality with its attendant condign punishments, ridicules, and exposures can throw against him.[48]

There is nothing of the threat of banishment, age, or disease, as present in *Henry IV Part 2* and *Henry V*, to threaten Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and so, when he is tricked, just as he is in *Henry IV Part 1*, there are no real consequences, as his effortless wit and dexterity can rebut all comers. If Falstaff is anything in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, he is perhaps a little bored, as all of these countryside japes seem too tame for him (and for our expectations following Falstaff's reputation) with no imminent threat. When Mistress Page invites Falstaff to join their community once and for all, Shakespeare signals not so much of a 'forced conversion', but of their admission that he was one of them all along, that these events were simply games among friends. Without there being anything at stake, there can be no 'adhesiveness'.

In this sense, then, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* must serve as the perfect vehicle for Falstaff, allowing him fully to live out the part of the Lord of Misrule without any of the inconveniences proffered by court life, such as the Battle of Shrewsbury or, indeed,

[48] Crane, 'Introduction', p. 11.

friendship with the Prince of Wales, and the expectations attendant on that. Yet, if this play gives license to Falstaff to (mis)behave however he wishes, who is he countering? If he is the Lord of Misrule, what is he railing against and mocking? Even the sedentary life of Windsor, surely a prime target for mockery, eventually accepts him, neutralising the 'threat' of his misrule by calmly bringing him into the fold.

With unlimited space and little threat, there is something of an impotency about Falstaff in this 'sequel' of sorts. What follows is very little 'adhesiveness'; without an 'excess' punishment, the Falstaff of *Merry Wives* is uncoupled from the 'adhesiveness' created by the Henriad plays. Like an exhibition fight between two retired boxers, there seems to be more of a focus on recapturing the past than providing any real contest. Of the 2020 exhibition match between Mike Tyson and Roy Jones Jr., both retired and in their 50s, sports commentator Ben Baby may as well have been describing Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*:

> Nostalgia was the main selling point for the entire fight. It wasn't about what Tyson or Jones actually did against each other. It was about reminding us what they looked like in their primes.[49]

In that sense, the fight 'exceeded [Baby's] low expectations for the evening', but, crucially, he follows this by noting, 'I don't want to see it again, because I don't think the appeal of watching Tyson lasts longer than one night'.[50] Like these two athletes, Falstaff's return to the ring, the wooden 'O' could be regarded as simply a show, one more demonstration of what he is, or was, capable of. Unfortunately, as with most attempts at connecting with our nostalgia, the reproduction is never quite as magical as the original.

Harriet Phillips summarises this feeling as the realisation that the play is 'refashioning the cultural detritus of the past', and that 'old pleasures of all kinds – festive, ritual, literary – have been diminished; while they still appeal, they no longer wholly satisfy'.[51] Perhaps such a return is an impossible one, and that any attempt to provide more

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[49] Michael Rothstein and Ben Baby, 'Mike Tyson-Roy Jones Jr. exceeded all expectations, but is it repeatable?', *ESPN* (29th November 2020), accessible at: <https://www.espn.co.uk/boxing/story/_/id/30410558/mike-tyson-roy-jones-jr-exceeded-all-expectations-repeatable> [accessed 17th November 2020].
[50] Michael Rothstein and Ben Baby, *ESPN*.
[51] Harriet Phillips, 'Late Falstaff, the Merry World, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*', *Shakespeare*, 10: 2 (2014), 111-137, p. 127.

Falstaff 'cannot be reproduced without loss'.[52] Surprisingly, and perhaps because of the existence of *Merry Wives*, there have been comparatively very few 'offshoots' created for Falstaff. *Falstaff's Wedding*, written by William Kenrick and published in 1766, features a farcical plot of the knight and his group attempting to restart their lives after Henry's rejection, resulting in Falstaff marrying Mistress Ursula once he hears that she has come into some money.[53] Crucially, there exists an earlier version of the play, from 1760, where Falstaff is instead cajoled into a plot to kill King Henry V, though, once it is foiled, he is brought back into the fold of court life: 'Sir John, your former ills/Your later act of loyalty hath cancell'd […] As a new man we take thee to our favour'.[54] The final part of the title of this pair of plays is critical to understanding why so few have attempted to write something similar: *Written in Imitation of Shakespeare*. 'Written in Imitation' suggests a playwright trying to capture some of the popularity of the character, rather than attempting to address some unanswered questions or right some wrongs, in much the same way as *Merry Wives* simply gives us more, uncomplicated Falstaff.

Undoubtedly, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* complicates the concept of 'adhesiveness' many times over. During every chapter of this thesis, there has been an examination of how 'adhesiveness' manifests itself once it has 'stuck' to a particular audience member. Sequels, prequels, and adaptations have all been considered. Tim Crouch and St. John Ervine attempt to answer 'what happens next?' to Malvolio and Shylock, looking at both the negative and positive results of their respective characters being exiled from *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*. Arnold Wesker and Marina Warner reframe Shylock and Caliban in worlds that are more familiar to them, in an attempt at resettling these characters away from the openly hostile environments that Shakespeare created for them originally. John Fletcher's *The Tamer Tam'd*, a sequel to *The Taming of the Shrew* written and performed within Shakespeare's own lifetime, attempts to tip the balance of power back into the favour of the wronged female characters, though, perhaps demonstrating his wisdom, he only attempts to do so after he has completely excised Katherina, the original shrew, from his adaptation.

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[52] Phillips, 'Late Falstaff, the Merry World, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*', p. 131.
[53] William Kenrick, *Falstaff's Wedding. A Comedy: As it is acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury Lane. Written in Imitation of Shakespeare* (London: L. Davis and others, 1773), accessible at: <https://data-historicaltexts-jisc-ac-uk.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view?pubId=ecco-0313900100> [accessed 27th February 2023].
[54] William Kenrick, *Falstaff's Wedding: A Comedy. Being a Sequel to the Second Part of the Play of King Henry the Fourth. Written in Imitation of Shakespeare* (London: J. Wilkie and others, 1760), p. 82, accessible at: <https://data-historicaltexts-jisc-ac-uk.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view?pubId=ecco-0314300600> [accessed 27th February 2023].

However, with each of these, we can never truly rid ourselves of that 'adhesive' feeling. The 'adhesiveness' of those Shakespearean originals never quite leaves.

With *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare appears to be making an attempt at exploiting 'adhesiveness', by bringing back a popular character and giving them another chance in the spotlight, a farewell tour. Unlike the other authors and adaptors, he refuses to change or remove Falstaff, rather he places him in a world only tangentially linked to that of the Henriad. The play refuses attempts to be classified, either because its chronology (both within and outside of the play) does not sit neatly enough with the Henriad to be classed as an outright sequel, or because repeating characters, such as Mistress Quickly, seem not to have any recollection of having met Falstaff in other plays, thus resisting the moniker of a prototypical spin-off. Perhaps more accurate would be the Japanese 外伝 (gaiden), transliterated as 'outside legend' or 'side story', allowing Falstaff to straddle the liminal space between two worlds that do not necessarily want to interact with, or acknowledge, each other.[55]

This disconnectedness, however, has its own problems, which ultimately undermine how successful Shakespeare could be with his exploitation of Falstaff's 'adhesiveness'. Though this is very much the same Falstaff, and not just another character with the same name, the disparate connection between these two 'versions' of Falstaff encourages us to think of them as different. As such, how effective can this return to the character be when it comes to answering our 'adhesive' reaction following *Henry IV Part 2* and *Henry V*? Though Anne Barton feels that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* 'constitutes a betrayal of Falstaff', both of the character and the characterisation, it is in fact not the fat knight who disappoints us, but the world of the play itself. When Barton remarks that Shakespeare 'attacked his own great comic creation',[56] it is arguable that something totally different has occurred – that Shakespeare ignored most of the narrative arc that the Henriad plays set Falstaff on, or ignored the 'adhesive' reaction to him and what the audience really wanted from the

[55] The term 'gaiden' is often used in the title of the spin-off itself, such as in the video games *Fire Emblem Gaiden* and *Resident Evil Gaiden*, or in offshoots of manga series, though this is not always the case. Tvtropes.org, though discussing the term's use in the video games industry, tellingly remarks that 'They are often lower budget and can be seen as cash-ins, but can be interesting if they choose a different viewpoint, poke fun at the original, or are simply more innovative than a large-budget game might be allowed to be'.
'Gaiden Game', tvtropes.org, accessible at: <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/GaidenGame> [accessed 8th March 2023].
[56] Barton, 'Falstaff and the comic community', p. 70.

character. Falstaff's plain insertion into *Merry Wives*, uncoupled from the baggage of the Henriad and all that happened to him in those plays, demonstrates that it is perhaps not the character who is 'adhesive' – not on their own – but the situation in which they find themselves. There are plenty of well-written or 'fully humanised' characters in Shakespeare, but can they produce an 'adhesive' reaction from the audience without first suffering under a surplus punishment? Is Falstaff as attractive from an 'adhesiveness' point of view without Henry's rejection?

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Falstaff clearly does what he is made to with the material he is given, and, though he can be seen as a weaker imitation of previous incarnations, he clearly speaks and behaves exactly as we would expect, even down to being tricked. The element that is changed, however, is the world which he inhabits, one in which nothing is really at stake. Where Fletcher removed Katherina in *The Tamer Tam'd* but kept the world she lived in, in *Merry Wives*, Shakespeare does the inverse. The end result is the same: there are no satisfactory answers to resolve the questions spawned by Henry's brutal rejection of his former friend. How does Falstaff cope with his exile at the end of *Part 2*? Will he reform so that he may return to Henry, or is that an impossible task? What occurs between *Henry IV Part 2* and *Henry V*, when Falstaff becomes ill, and does this period incorporate *The Merry Wives of Windsor*? And, most importantly when dealing with 'adhesiveness', does Falstaff die of heartbreak, a direct result of Henry banishing him? *The Merry Wives of Windsor* does not, and, indeed, cannot, answer any of these questions because of how tangentially it links with the Henriad.

Shakespeare delivers on his promise of more Falstaff, then, but this is not the Falstaff we were hoping for. This Falstaff has none of the emotional scars or depth we were expecting, as though Shakespeare has rewound time on the character. However, the character we want does not exist. It is merely a product of 'adhesiveness', where we imagine all of the possibilities of what happens to Falstaff post-exile, and we are naturally disappointed when *The Merry Wives of Windsor* does not exactly replicate our own expectations. The strength of feeling towards the character at the close of *Henry IV Part 2* is so strong, arguably, that any attempt to 'finish' his arc without satisfactorily confronting the aforementioned big questions can only ever disappoint us. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* demonstrates that even Shakespeare can shirk this responsibility. As Roger Wood and Mary

Clarke put it, 'How tiresome of Queen Elizabeth to ask for a play about Sir John in love! Was there not enough of this glorious character in the two parts of *Henry IV* to satisfy even Gloriana?'[57] Perhaps, then, less is more when it comes to Shakespeare's 'adhesive' characters. Allow us the exile scene, and then leave the 'adhesive' reaction to do the rest.

[57] Roger Wood and Mary Clarke, 'The Merry Wives of Windsor', *Shakespeare at the Old Vic: Third Season* (London: Adam and Charles Black., 1956), p. 25.

Conclusion

The essential power of 'adhesiveness', though it begins to reveal itself much earlier, lies in Shakespeare's conclusions. Their faux-completeness for certain characters is the catalyst which transforms what would ordinarily be a satisfying ending for all into a frustrating, yet tantalising, invitation to cogitate, discuss, and, eventually, create. What makes the characters explored throughout this thesis – Malvolio, Shylock, Caliban, Katherina, and Falstaff – so interesting, so vital, is that they, and their own unfinished arcs, are what upset the conclusions of their respective plays. Each are noteworthy in their own right; they are all well-written, multi-dimensional, and, as explored throughout, 'humanised' characters. This aspect alone, however, is not enough to create an 'adhesive' character. What Shakespeare does with these characters, after building them up, is to locate their weakness and write a very personalised attack against them, one which, as has been argued, could be interpreted as 'excessive', a show of force, an 'unequal contest',[1] as Charles Lamb describes it, orchestrated by a power much greater than that of the individual. Though putting a sympathetic character in this situation is an essential component of creating an 'adhesive' reaction, this is still not enough – not quite. The final part of the equation, no less vital than the previous two, is Shakespeare's insistence on 'disappearing' his 'adhesive' characters. The playwright fulfils the wishes of the play's dominant energy, reaches down into the dramatic world, and removes the 'problem', the obstacle who is preventing a unified conclusion.

To 'conclude' is, of course, 'to end'.[2] In that sense, the plays explored throughout this thesis conclude adequately; a narrative arc of some description reaches its natural end. In *Twelfth Night*, the 'festive' atmosphere of the play, one described by C. L. Barber as essentially 'saturnalian',[3] is triumphant in not only expelling the killjoy steward Malvolio, but in revealing and pairing almost all the remaining cast of cross-dressed twins and lovers. In *The Merchant of Venice*, the economic world of the Venetian republic successfully defends itself in a court of law

[1] Charles Lamb, 'On Some of the Old Actors', in *The Essays of Elia* (London: Methuen, 1920), 223-238 (pp. 227-231).
[2] Samuel Johnson, 'conclude', *A Dictionary of the English Language, 1755* [online], accessible at: <https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/views/search.php?term=conclude> [accessed 30th March 2023].
[3] C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959; reprinted 2012), p. 1. ProQuest ebook.

against the sharp-tongued and aggressive Jew Shylock, before, once again, pairing young lovers. For *The Tempest*, old scores are settled and an exiled family returns to Antonio's homeland, ushering in yet another marriage, this time between the next generation. *The Taming of the Shrew* is, narratively, a lot simpler: a difficult woman, a 'shrew', is matched with an exuberant suitor, who, initially to win a wager, woos and weds her, before she is instructed to serve as a model of obedience for the other female characters of the play to follow. Finally, Falstaff, a character who straddles four plays, serves as a vehicle for the audience to witness the dramatic ascension of King Henry V, who starts out in a tavern and finishes by fulfilling his destiny, by leading the English to victory against the French. All of these plays, on a narrative level, conclude, that is 'end', satisfactorily. The worlds in which these characters exist, whether they be festive, serious, or romantic, reach where they need to be in order to move the story on, so that the audience can feel as though the transaction between playwright and playgoer, which began when the play started, has been closed.

For these conclusions to be reached, an obstacle must be removed. In the examples of the aforementioned plays, those obstacles are the 'adhesive' characters, and thus, being removed, those characters are exempt from a satisfactory conclusion. However, such is the nature of their removal, to be targeted so specifically and excessively, that the overall ending of the play becomes unsatisfactory, inconclusive. How can an audience be expected to feel that the play has concluded when there are still some characters left unaccounted for? Characters who, up until their removal, seemed like an integral part of the world they existed in? Malvolio, Shylock, Caliban, Katherina, and Falstaff are, in one way or another, all missing at the end. Following their excessive removal from the side of opposition, we are left with an incomplete society and, without everybody involved, a non-conclusion for the play as a whole. If one part is missing, then the entire ending is, as Logan Pearsall Smith puts it, 'a little out of tune'.[4]

If the treatment of a single character can disrupt what should be a satisfying conclusion for a whole play, then what did Shakespeare do wrong in the conception of these 'adhesive' characters? This question, of course, assumes that a mistake was made in the first place. What this thesis has argued throughout is that, if Shakespeare created these characters and their

[4] Logan Pearsall Smith, *On Reading Shakespeare* (London: Constable & Co, 1933), p. 96.

'unequal contests' deliberately, then their deployment in these plays signifies a playwright experimenting with different ways of capturing, and, most importantly, holding, an audience beyond the timeframe of a performance.

Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of 1755 proffers a slight variation of what it means to 'conclude': 'To settle opinion'.[5] The argument of this thesis is that Shakespeare's intention when utilising these 'adhesive' characters is the exact opposite of this definition; Shakespeare wishes to unsettle opinion. By introducing a debate, a difference of opinion akin to Ovid's description of Actaeon's fate, to an otherwise 'natural' conclusion, the playwright ensures that not only are we still thinking about the play and its characters long after it has finished, but that there remains the potential for others after Shakespeare to continue, alter, or completely rewrite the story, thus prolonging the effectiveness of the 'adhesiveness'.[6]

Each of these 'adhesive' characters is removed from their world, after they have been targeted and attacked, in a different way, and this progression is what inspired the experiential order of the chapters of this thesis. Malvolio and Shylock 'disappear'. Both of them leave the stage and are never seen again, though they may still be felt by both the audience and the remaining characters. Their abrupt disappearances are what inspire others to ask the question, 'What happens to next?' Tim Crouch presents a Malvolio who threatens to kill himself after his humiliation, unable to return to work, and Wesker's Shylock longs for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, 'to be buried there' (II. 6. p.82).[7] The key progression between Malvolio and Shylock is *when* they are removed: for Malvolio it is right the play's close, whereas Shylock's absence is allowed to simmer with the audience for a full Act V.

Caliban and Katherina remain present for the conclusions of their plays, but perhaps only physically. The former, though it is not always clear, is accepted (or forced) into servitude by his existing master, Prospero, and presumably whisked away to Italy, where his status as a foreigner will undoubtedly put his wellbeing in jeopardy. Katherina is converted (or forced)

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[5] Samuel Johnson, 'conclude', *A Dictionary of the English Language, 1755* [online], accessible at: <https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/views/search.php?term=conclude> [accessed 30th March 2023].

[6] Ovid, 'The. xv. Bookes of P. Ovidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis', trans. by Arthur Golding (London: Willyam Seres, 1567), fol. 34r, *Early English Books Online*, accessible at: <https://search-proquest-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/docview/2240861651?accountid=12117> [accessed 27th August 2020].

[7] Arnold Wesker, *The Merchant* (London: Methuen London Ltd., 1983). All further references to *The Merchant* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and page number in parentheses.

into being an obedient wife, instead of a scold, though her lengthy and awkward speech at the close of the play brings into question the validity of her transformation. These conversions tend to inspire a different type of 'adhesive' reaction, such as Fletcher's *The Tamer Tam'd*, which do not continue the story as much as they attempt to rewrite it completely.[8] Both characters are 'broken in' to fit a pre-existing mould, and it is arguable if anything of the original character is left once the operation seems to be successful. Though the two are very similar, there still remains a key progression: Caliban's narrative, like Malvolio and Shylock, is part of the play's sub-plot, whereas the story of Katherina, unusually, is front and centre of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

With Falstaff, Shakespeare makes good on the promise that he only ever hinted at with his other 'adhesive' characters: he kills him off. On a surface level, the only real progression seems to be the obvious inversion of tone from a more serious character being opposed by 'festivity', to a jolly character being opposed by the inevitability of fate, of a royal ascension. However, we also see how effective and important 'adhesiveness' was even at the time of Falstaff's first appearances on stage, as Shakespeare shrewdly capitalises on his character's popularity to write his own adaptation, the non sequitur *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Falstaff's is the natural final chapter to this thesis, a type of 'adhesiveness' which looks very different, almost a complete inversion, from that of the first chapter, of *Twelfth Night*, and one which has the room, over multiple plays, to expand and to be explored; to truly 'adhere'. Falstaff's longevity as one of Shakespeare's most recognisable and loved characters is testament to the power of 'adhesiveness' when properly utilised.

All of these characters, though they are 'disappeared' in different ways, share important common ground when it comes to 'adhesiveness'. They are all essentially sympathetic, despite their often very obvious flaws, and this is sometimes, such as in the cases of Shylock and Caliban, established through opposition, by showing very early on that these are characters who are wronged by the mainstream society of their plays. What follows is the 'unequal contest', the targeted and personalised attack orchestrated by a much more powerful foe which,

[8] John Fletcher, *The Tamer Tamed*, ed. by Lucy Munro (London: Methuen Drama, 2010). Drama Online ebook. All further references to *The Tamer Tamed* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.

in all cases, goes one (or more) steps too far for the reaction to be considered 'justified' or 'justice' for any previous wrongs. This is the repeatable part of the equation which seems to change very little beyond how it is tailored to hurt a particular character, followed then by their removal, which finalises the 'adhesiveness', ensuring that the audience will leave the theatre questioning where the character went, or if what happened to them was any one of comedic, 'festive', or justified.

Exploring the different ways in which 'adhesiveness' can be shown to the audience is what drove the experiential chapter order of this thesis, as it moves from a more basic or generic explanation of the term with Malvolio, free from any as many of the weighty, modern social topics which surround the other characters, such as antisemitism, colonialism, and gender, to more complex and intricate discussions. However, this is certainly not the only way to do it, and there remains considerable value in exploring what other conclusions can be reached by looking at 'adhesiveness' through alternative lenses, such as, as is usually standard, chronologically.

Looking at the plays chronologically, ordered by the most widely believed dates of conception, Katherina would come first. *The Taming of the Shew* is the only one of the plays covered in this thesis where the 'adhesive' character, and their narrative, are part of the main plot.[9] This obviously has its benefits: if Shakespeare wishes to provoke a debate, then why not put the 'problematic' aspect at the forefront of the play. The existence of *The Tamer Tam'd*, written within Shakespeare's own lifetime, is perhaps evidence of how effective Katherina's 'adhesiveness' was. However, Fletcher starts his play by immediately killing off Shakespeare's original shrew, which may suggest that, when it comes to creating a lasting 'adhesive' reaction, the greater nuance of a more experienced playwright is key.

Following this character would be Shylock, and here we see a Shakespeare experimenting with when and where he should apply the 'adhesive' equation. Though Shylock's narrative exists within a sub-plot of sorts, it is one so domineering that it often completely subordinates that of Bassanio's romantic quest for Portia. The major question of *The*

[9] Though Falstaff is one of the main characters of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, this play serves more as an adaptation or offshoot of the Henriad, where he is part of the sub-plot, subordinate to the arcs of both Henry IV and Henry V.

Merchant of Venice is 'is Shylock *too* 'adhesive'?' By making him such a persuasive character, which must be so in order to balance his obvious desire to exact revenge and spill Christian blood, and by removing him very early on, in Act IV, all we as an audience can think about is Shylock. For good or for bad, Shylock's 'adhesiveness' is incredibly effective, and what we are left with is a damp squib of an Act V, haunted by a character who has long since left the stage for good.

Falstaff, as always, complicates things. The plays of the Henriad definitely precede *Twelfth Night*, though *The Merry Wives of Windsor* sits much closer to it. The Henriad plays are, of course, histories, and so here Shakespeare inverts what was so far the standard process of a serious character being opposed by a more romantic, 'festive' world. Falstaff, the very embodiment of saturnalia, is brutally disposed of by his former friend Hal, the new King Henry V, before being physically absent from *Henry V*, his death briefly mentioned in passing by some of his tavern companions. Could Shakespeare have anticipated just how 'adhesive' Falstaff would be? The close of *Henry IV Part 2*, where the epilogue promises to 'continue the story with Sir John in it' (Epilogue. 26-8),[10] certainly seems to suggest so. However, the next time we see Falstaff on stage is in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which could be seen as Shakespeare trying to put the character back in the box. The playwright indulges the whims of the expectant audience and gives us more Falstaff, but it never quite satisfies. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* side-steps the debate which Shakespeare himself encouraged during the first two parts of *Henry IV*, and so misses the point when it comes to 'adhesiveness': the audience does not just want more Falstaff, they want answers to questions; they want an equitable and fair ending for the character.

Twelfth Night sits at an important moment in Shakespeare's career, moving away from his initial comedies and histories and into an era of 'problem plays' (a term which Neil Rhodes argues is troubled itself, with most of Shakespeare's plays now being seen as having 'problematic' elements to them[11]) and tragedies. This play, and Shakespeare's use of Malvolio, is extremely elegant in its simplicity. The steward is present until the very end, and his sub-plot is still very much subordinate to the main, despite how often an audience may find themselves

[10] William Shakespeare, *King Henry IV Part 2*, ed by. James C. Bulman (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2016). All further references to *King Henry IV Part 2* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.
[11] Neil Rhodes, 'The Controversial Plot: Declamation and the Concept of the "Problem Play"', *MLR*, 95: 3 (2000), 609-622.

thinking about Malvolio. As such, debate is easy to come by once the play finishes: there are those who enjoy a simple, comedic night at the theatre, and those who are left disturbed by the hounding of a hard-working steward. It seems doubtful if Shakespeare's understanding and mastery of 'adhesiveness' ever peaks beyond *Twelfth Night*, and it is perhaps only because of how 'regular' or 'archetypal' the rest of the play and characters feel that the treatment of Malvolio is not more widely considered as a pinnacle of Shakespeare's dramatic invention.

Finally, *The Tempest* marks a small, though definitely noticeable, step back towards a less streamlined representation of 'adhesiveness' in favour of more complex characterisation. Caliban's motivations and prior activities, much like Shylock's, are questionable at best, but it is because of these, and because of the explosion of post-colonial criticism in the twentieth century, that the treatment of this character is still widely debated today. Like Malvolio, Shakespeare keeps Caliban present until the very end of the play, but his questionable submission to Prospero, a non-conclusion for the character, has echoes of Katherina. Like *The Taming of the Shrew*, Caliban's conversion – his declaration that he will now 'seek for grace' (V. 1. 293)[12] – seems like an attempt at definitively concluding the play and the character's arc, but the uncertainty regarding his sincerity in fact does the opposite, leaving open so many possibilities. The 'adhesiveness' still exists – the sympathetic character and the excessive punishment are still effective – but the questions regarding Caliban's own ending are numerous, as opposed to the very simple, big questions which Malvolio's exit poses. Instead of merely asking 'What happens next to Caliban?', the audience is pushed to consider issues such as original ownership of the island and the legitimacy of Prospero's enslavement of both Caliban and Ariel through powerful magic.

By viewing these plays chronologically, we find a playwright becoming more comfortable using 'adhesiveness' with subtlety, nuance, and complexity. Very early on in his career, Shakespeare experiences just what 'adhesiveness' can do for a character or for a whole play, as, it is clear that, by encouraging healthy debate, there can be an increase and prolonging of popularity. Nonetheless, the order which this thesis has chosen, starting with *Twelfth Night*,

[12] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. by David Lindley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). All further references to *The Tempest* will be of this edition, followed by act, scene, and line number in parentheses.

Shakespeare's 'best' example of 'adhesiveness', is designed to introduce the key concepts first before adding the various complexities and inversions presented by the subsequent chapters. By ending with Falstaff, who may be Shakespeare's most famous and successful example of an 'adhesive' character, the thesis concludes by demonstrating just how effective the concept can be at inspiring debate and a robust afterlife beyond the play, and, hopefully, just how important considering 'adhesiveness' is for wider Shakespeare studies, particularly in response to those who may wish to dismiss any sort of emotional reaction to great art.

The future of character criticism

A great deal of this thesis relies on asking the same question in different ways: 'What happens next?' Though offshoots and adaptations can go some way in answering that question, there can never be a definitive answer, such is the nature of each audience member's unique reactions to 'adhesive' characters. Though it seems as though *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, with its authority as an adaptation written by Shakespeare, should be a sufficient answer to the question of 'What happens next to Falstaff?', its perceived inadequacies prove fatal to that idea. These questions, therefore, require a certain level of imagination to answer.

As it was briefly touched upon in the chapter on Malvolio, this kind of analysis, 'character criticism', is thoroughly out of fashion in academic circles. This is summarised by a line in J. C. Trewin's 1978 work, *Going to Shakespeare*: 'Some critics will not hear of a past or future: to imagine the characters off stage is unforgivable.'[13] This kind of mindset, however, is completely antithetical to studies of 'adhesiveness'. How can an audience 'take home' a character without imagining the potential of their past or future? What is left of Malvolio at the close of *Twelfth Night* if we refuse to wonder about what his promised revenge would look like? 'Adhesiveness' cannot exist without asking 'What happens next?' Indeed, a character only 'adheres' when that question is asked.

For some, 'character criticism' is the unprofessional, amateurish, non-academic side of literary studies. Its usage demonstrates a naivety of thinking, and a misunderstanding of the text due to too much of one's own personality being projected onto a character's experience. The

[13] J. C. Trewin, *Going to Shakespeare* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978), p. 167.

crucial text for when this opinion became standard is L. C. Knights' 'How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?', published in 1933. In this publication, Knights takes to task, among others, Logan Pearsall Smith's 'On Reading Shakespeare', which has been cited multiple times throughout this thesis, claiming that there is 'nothing of that interest in the present essay'.[14] 'How Many Children?' was clearly written in response to what Knights felt was the dominant and overbearing trend of 'character criticism' of the time, most notably the influential *Shakespearean Tragedy* written by A. C. Bradley, which posed such questions as 'Where was Hamlet at the time of his father's death?', no doubt inspiring the mocking title of Knights' essay.[15] In fact, his summary of the academic landscape is an almost perfect mirror to how I would describe the same landscape today:

> We are faced with this conclusion: the only profitable approach to Shakespeare is a consideration of his plays as dramatic poems, of his use of language to obtain a total complex emotional response. Yet the bulk of Shakespeare criticism is concerned with his characters, his heroines, his love of Nature or his "philosophy" – with everything in short, except with the words on the page, which it is the main business of the critic to examine. I wish to consider as briefly as possible how this paradoxical state of affairs arose. To examine the historical development of that kind of criticism which is mainly concerned with "character" is to strengthen the case against it.[16]

As with the dismissal of Charles Lamb's reaction to Bensley's Malvolio by C. L. Barber and Sylvan Barnet, there is something of a finality about Knights' statement: there can be no room for multiple interpretations when there is but one 'profitable approach' to Shakespeare. Knights' prescribed method is definitely 'profitable', but it is not the only way to approach a text, and there is plenty of room for alternatives.

Perhaps most illuminating is Knights' opinion of eighteenth-century criticism: 'One form of charge against eighteenth-century Shakespeare criticism is that it made the approach too easy

[14] L. C. Knights, *How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?* (Cambridge: The Minority Press, 1933), p. 4.
[15] A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan and Co., 1905; reprinted 1919).
[16] Knights, *How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?*, p. 11-2.

[…] a process that was fatal to criticism.'[17] Maybe it would be a little unfair to suggest that this is the crux of Knights' issue with 'character criticism', that it opens up Shakespeare to the uneducated, those without a formal university education. If anybody can understand and think about Shakespeare, then what value is the education? Unfortunately, such a dismissive mindset, and the idea that there should always be an insurmountable gulf between professional academics and an amateur reader, still exists today, though progress is being made. Writing for *The Point* magazine, Laura Baudot expresses surprise at the type of conversations being held by a book group consisting of laypeople:

> Yet except for drawing attention to puns (unfailingly a crowd pleaser), my analysis of the story's formal elements killed the mood, eliciting polite nods and the dreaded deathly silence. I had much more success with my other impulse, which was to gossip about the story, comparing our experiences of shock at the ending's twist, speculating on the identity of the tragic heroine's lover. I talked in impersonal terms about living in a small town and everyone knowing your business, and asked the participants if they had had similar experiences. We talked about the human need to build idols only to tear them down.
>
> I left that first meeting feeling like I had just binged on Amazon reviews. My encounter with the confidence of the lay reader hinted broadly at the irrelevance of academic literary studies for the reading public. In the room, as on Amazon, was a vibrant, bustling community of readers who opine in blissful ignorance of the discipline of literary studies and don't care a whit about the MLA.[18]

Not only does this demonstrate that 'character criticism' makes literary texts more accessible for everyone, but it also suggests that the current standard of literary studies is both hard to grasp and, crucially, failing. The more we as academics alienate the general public from 'our' texts, the greater the gulf will become. Baudot continues by asking herself:

> What is the purpose of the academic study of literature? I was not sure any more. As I stood before my undergraduate students, I

[17] Knights, *How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?*, p. 23-4.
[18] Laura Baudot, 'Closer Reading: Teaching fiction at work', *The Point Magazine*, 22 May 2019.

> had never felt more filled with love for what I do, nor more uncertain about how to do it. […] Living well required close reading real-life experiences; reading well, in the sense of a deepened knowledge of the formal properties of texts, required personal identification. Read your life and live in books.[19]

'Character criticism' alone does not have the answers, nor does Knights' modernist, impersonal approach to Shakespeare. However, Toril Moi, also writing for *The Point* magazine, insists that we must drop the 'taboo' of 'character criticism' to have the 'freedom to be whatever kind of critic we wish to be, to work on the kind of writing we care about, in ways that make intellectual sense to us'.[20] This point, more than anything, echoes the vital spirit of this thesis. Rehabilitating Charles Lamb and his experience with *Twelfth Night* is not just for Lamb's sake, but for the sake of achieving a greater understanding of Shakespeare, from all the angles, without immediately shutting down anything with which we disagree. There is so much room in Shakespeare studies, room enough for everybody, that there is really no need to exclude or dismiss based on a difference of opinion. 'Adhesiveness', as it has been described throughout this thesis, is the natural reaction to being encouraged to debate, to feel for certain characters and allow ourselves to connect to them, to imagine their 'lives' beyond the limits of the page. By refusing to allow ourselves to do this, we lose 'adhesiveness', and thereby lose some recognition of the true dexterity of Shakespeare as a dramatist and, perhaps, of others' humanity.

[19] Baudot, 'Closer Reading: Teaching fiction at work'.
[20] Toril Moi, 'Real Characters: Literary criticism and the existential turn', *The Point Magazine*, 28 January 2020.

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